

Kouritsu-Chu Madoushi

効率厨魔導師、 第二の人生で 魔導を極める

謙虚なサークル 著
kenkyonasakuru

2



The Mage Will Master Magic Efficiently In His Second Life

– Re:Master Magic –

- Volume 2 -

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CHAPTER 36

A NEW...

—Town of Beruta.

[Waa~ So this is Beruta Town?! This is the first time I've ever come to such a big city!]
(Claude speaking)

[I have come here before, so let me be your guide. I will make sure, Claude doesn't become a lost child] (Milly speaking)

Could it be that she has already forgotten that the last time she came here, she was the one wandering around and getting lost like a child?

Milly was already leading Claude away, and separating from me.

[Hey! Where do you guys plan on going?]

[Well~ I smelled something really nice from that direction so I kind of just.....]

Milly is a person who really lives via instinct.

[Our stomachs are empty, let's go after we eat lunch?]

Come to think of it, it is already daytime.

Having something to eat before heading off to Lydia's store is not such a bad idea.

But they should have at least said something before trying to head off.

—Down Town.

In the middle of the buzzing streets of Beruta, a fragrant smell of meat and fish being cooked stimulates our empty stomachs.

Along the pathways, there were numerous restaurants, and on the opposite side, there was also food stalls with all kinds of cuisines.

Milly had sparkling eyes as she looked around the vicinity.

Oi oi, saliva is starting to drip out of your mouth ya know? How improper.

Claude also seems to be in absorbed interest with her surroundings.

[Welcome! Welcome! That cute young lady over there! The Taikoyaki our store serves is the best in Beruta Town! Please come over and try some!]

[Is that so?]

[Well that's the thing! When people of this town talk about Taikoyaki, it's always about our shop!]

Taikoyaki is is a mixture of meat being rolled in vegetables, furnished with a special sauce and then baked.

It is a local specialty dish from Beruta.

Naturally, there were other food stalls around grilling some Taikoyaki, but there was no one who boasted like the person in front of us.

The other food stalls were glaring at this particular shop, and it seemed that this guy didn't seem to care at all.

What a scary fellow.

[Then.....]

[You can't Milly-san]

Milly was completely enraptured by the smell of the muffins and she was about to buy them, the shop owner was also convinced that he had already won her over when a voice spoke out.

It was Claude.

[Whilst it is true that this shop seems to sell delicious Taikoyaki, but was it really true that it was the best in Beruta? Although I can't say that I've looked around at every

shop, in comparison with other stores, both the quantity and the price for food here is much more expensive than the others]

[Th.....The meat we use here is different from the other stores!]

[The meat seems thin, and I feel that it doesn't look very fresh, wouldn't you agree?]

Guu.....the middle aged man gulps down his breath.

As usual Claude is really detailed.

She really acts like a girl.

Just as I was thinking such things, Claude looks at me with a smile that said "I am a girl, you know?".

Can she read other people's thoughts or something?

[With that being said Milly-san, my recommendation is that shop over there. It would seem that the: quality, amount and price are all of high standards.

[Nn in that case, let's go over there!]

Milly immediately charges over to the shop on the other side.

The other shop stall owners all banded together with a gaze that said "Serves you right!" to the fellow who just got owned by Claude.

The grudge between these shop owners are a terrifying thing.

The shop that Claude recommend was a narrow place, but it served a large amount of food and was relatively cheap compared to the other shop, all three of us eat for a portion of five people, and both Milly and Claude had satisfied looks after finishing our meal.

———Lydia's store.

We were standing in front.

The two girls seemed to be a little bit nervous.

The door rattled open, and we were allowed inside the shop.

Inside the store, there was several guests, and an energetic voice welcoming the customers was heard.

It was Lydia's voice.

When I headed to the interior of the shop, Lydia's back figure could be seen as she was doing her packaging work.

I notified the two girls, that she was the one I was planning on meeting.

[It's been a long time, Lydia]

When I called out to her, Lydia faced towards me and noticed our presence.

[Ohh~ Isn't it Zeph-kun! Long time no see, are you well?]

She stood up and brushed the dust of her hips, her breasts which were standing tall before our eyes started to bounce. (sfx ponpon (brushing dust off)

Same as ever, it was huge.

[Hello, I've heard so much about you from Zeph-kun. You must be Lydia, right?]

Claude calls out to Lydia.

[Oh, Are you the one that Zeph-kun talked about? The person who is the Guild Master? You are quite the pretty boy aren't you?]

[Thank you very much. However I am not the one who is the guild master. Moreover, I am a girl]

[Ahhaha. I knew that when I saw you! It's just that even so, you really seemed like a pretty boy!]

[is.....is that so?]

To be able to see through Claude being a woman in the first meeting.

Lydia is incredible.

[This is the Guild Master Milly]

[Umm.....It's nice to meet.....]

[Ohhh~ So cute~ ♪ petite~ and such a fluffy blonde hair♪]

[Mugyuu!~]

Lydia captures Milly who was trying to introduce herself, and starts to hold her tightly like a plush toy.

Milly's face was tucked just perfectly in between Lydia's breasts and whilst being embraced, Milly's hands and feet were struggling to get free.

[Please leave it at that, Milly seems to be in pain]

[Ariya(Oh la)?.....I'm sorry~ Milly-chan was just so adorable.....]

Showing a smile that displayed her complete lack of reflection, she liberated Milly from her grasp.

Milly was having a violent coughing fit, and Claude anxiously calls out to her.

[Are you alright? Milly-san?]

[.....]

[Milly-san?]

When I glanced at her from the side, Milly's face was like she just got totally defeated in something.

She was alternatively comparing her own chest to Lydia's, and the more she looked she rapidly started to show the white of her eyes.

[Milly?]

[.....It can't be, it definitely cannot be]

She was slapping her own cheeks, whilst deliriously talking to herself repeating the same thing over and over.

[Which reminds me, has the item I left with you sold yet?]

[Ahh, yeah. It got sold.....however, is Milly-chan okay?]

[She will return to her usual self sooner or later, right?]

[Zeph-kun, you are unexpectedly quite heartless~]

[It's her usual routine]

[Oh is it really....the norm~?]

Lydia was smirking at me whilst we went deeper into the store.

Claude had a face full of concern as she kept comforting Milly, but it would seem that her recovery will not be seen anytime soon.

Because Lydia beckons me in, I decided to rely on Claude to take care of Milly.

[Yes! This is how much it was sold for, 320,000 Rup. If I subtract the money lost when we went hunting, your share of the profits come to 305,000 Rup, right?]

[Thank you]

I received a bunch of paper money from Lydia, and I gave her my thanks.

With this amount of money, I think that the cost of living and purchasing equipment can be managed for now.

During break time, Lydia left the shop back to her father's care, and she was drinking tea with us.

Marveling at the tart cakes that Lydia made, we sipped on the slightly sweet tasting tea.

Once in a while Lydia would try to touch Milly's body, but the more she tried, Milly got better at running away, and Lydia seemed to have a regrettable look on her face.

This fellow, she's acting like some kind of sexual predator old man.

Like father, like daughter.....

Along the way, Claude started to sit in between the two people, at any rate, it seems like Lydia finally gave up.

[By the way Lydia, I was thinking of asking you to make our guild emblem accessory...]

As I said this, Claude began to show the emblem she designed to Lydia.

[Oh Well isn't this cutee~Nn♪ But it will take a considerable amount of money you know? The cost for the design will be 50,000 Rupl, additionally each time you need to make one it will cost around 5,000 Rupl as well~]

[Th.....That is fairly expensive isn't it.....]

It's custom made, and if we thought about it, it was quite a reasonable price, however, for us who, was already having trouble maintaining our equipment's, the amount was a little too severe for us to pay.

[Noo, well as one of the members of this guild, shall I cooperate with you guys just this once and make it free of charge~?]

Lydia was crossing her arms as she said this.

Ah, that's right, I do remember inviting her to join the guild.

At that time, she didn't seem all that motivated to join, but it seems that she is considerably interested right now.....Or more like she's acting like she has already joined.

Did she take that much of a liking towards Milly?

The person in question, Milly, was perhaps not good at dealing with Lydia, and hearing Lydia say such things, her body began to quiver. (sfx bikun = tremble/quiver)

[Nee~ Milly-chan, what do you think?]

Lydia was staring at Milly with the eyes of some kind of carnivorous cat ready to pounce on her prey. Milly who was being asked by Lydia became silent, and after a while she answered back with a determined face.

[.....That's true... Since you are going out of your way to help us.....I think that we should rely...on you. From here on out, please take care of us Lydia-san.....]

[It's fine to call me Lydia~ Let's get to know each other kay~ Milly-chan♪]

Lydia cheerfully requests a handshake from Milly, and Milly bitterly accepts it.

As one would expect, from a devious merchant like her, she easily lures her prey in.

I talked to Milly using the guild message system.

(Milly, if you believe that Lydia is too difficult to deal with, you don't have to force yourself to put her into the guild, alright? Besides, we aren't that pressured for money right now)

(It's alright, moreover this person, she's strong right? She's really good with money, and her personality is also good, she's also really good at cooking, and she's a really beautiful woman.....H, her, b, breasts are also.....That's why I think that she will be a valuable asset for the guild!)

I'm not quite sure whether the last few points she raised had anything to do with war potential though?

[I, won't lose alright.....!]

Milly declares such a thing towards Lydia whilst staring at her with a fierce fighting spirit, on the other hand, Lydia was grinning and affectionately looking towards Milly with a slovenly face.

CHAPTER 37

BASE

—Beruta Inn

Lydia referred us to the [White-bellied Tanuki] , a three story inn that resembled a private house.

I suppose it's trying to infer that a tanuki with a white belly isn't evil and is instead sincere.

But, it gives off the complete opposite impression and is instead kind of suspicious...

The landlady seems to be good natured on the outside, and the flowerbed looks to be watered.

I felt some relief as it didn't seem particularly suspicious.

[Hello!]

[We'd like to take up lodging here for a while, are there any rooms open?]

[Oh, welcome.....a, could you guys be the three child adventurers Lydia-chan talked about?]

[That's ri~ght! We're the guild "Blue Sky Hunters"~! If you ever have anything you need done, please come ask us!]

Whoosh, Milly bows her head.

Shortly after Claude does so as well, and I, reluctantly, follow suit.

She shrewdly takes the chance for some early advertising.

Earning money from the people around here isn't really efficient or enjoyable, but it might be good hear their requests and take part in activities in the area to familiarize ourselves.

If anything were to happen, it'd be awkward if people focused on us, so I'd like to avoid that.

[Ahahaha, well then if anything comes up I'll be asking for you. The rooms can be readied soon, so as soon as you sign your name I can take you in.]

Lydia's talk helped us out, and without any particular issues, we settled down at the inn.

Children staying and lodging by themselves for a long time could cause various problems after all. After we'd written our names in the register, we were given the keys and led to the rooms.

We rented two rooms.

One for Claude and Milly, and my room/storeroom.

Bags and various items are scattered about, livingware, clothes and luggage are tossed about even though we've just arrived.

By the way, most of the luggage is Milly's.

We'll have to clean it up later.

But I'm already worn out for the day. At times like this there's nothing better than taking a bath.

I heard there was a bath on the first floor so I grab a change of clothes and decide to head on down.

I opened the door and immediately ran into Milly and Claude both holding towels.

[Zeph you're going to take a bath too?]

[A...yeah]

[No peeking ok?!]

Bleh~ Milly sticks out her tongue at me.

Who'd wanna peep on you?

The three of us go down to the first floor bath and separate into two different changing rooms. I take off my clothes, open the door and look at the big bath room spread before my eyes.

The bath looks large enough to fit 10 adults easily and there are some rocks placed around that gives the bath a certain charm.

Come to think of it the landlady said that the White-bellied Tanuki's selling point was its large public bath. Certainly it's rare to see such a big bath anywhere.

I rinse myself, then thoroughly immerse myself in the hot water. The water surrounding me makes me spit out a sigh from my lungs.

Being able to have this big bath all to myself, is a so called luxury I'd say.

As I think that, the door clatters open and I hear people's voices coming closer.

Has this luxury ended already...?

I thought in disappointment as two shadows appeared in the steam.

They were a small shadow with long hair and a slender shadow with short-cut hair.

[Woah, what a big bath!]

[That's right, I've never been in such a bath before either]

It's Milly and Claude.

The two of them are walking with their fronts covered with a towel, talking amicably with each other.

This...This is BAD!

I dive under the water immediately and slowly move away from the exit and into the shadow of a nearby rock.



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Why were they here? This was mixed bathing?

Keeping quiet while my mind is in chaos, I let my head break the surface of the water.

Splash, I hear the sounds of people rinsing their bodies, followed by a splash as a body crashes into the water. The surface of the bathwater ripples.

[You can't do that Milly-san. You don't want to bother the other guests do you?]

[There's no one else here. Claude you should come in too.]

[That's no good, mou~]

Claude smiles as she calmly enters the bath. The strict teachings of a high class family of knights have been thoroughly ingrained into her body I see.

Claude will never change in matters like this.

[Fuu~It feels sooo good]

[Mmhm!]

Claude is sitting still in the bath as Milly paddles around her.

And I'm sitting here wanting to move yet unable to.

What am I supposed to do? I think as I hear the sound of water splashing again.

[Hyaaaa!~]

[Fufufufu~ Claude-san seems to be quite stiff~I'll rub your shoulders for you~]

[Wai.....stop it plea....those aren't my shoul...n', that tickles]

Claude says that and twists her body, while Milly tries to hold on. I guess no one taught her to be calm and abide by rules in the bath.

She wasn't able to put up much resistance.

Claude's charming voice faintly echoes throughout the big public bath.

.....wait, this ain't funny.....

This is so vexing, I'm caught in between a rock and a hard place.

As the sounds and voices continued, I sank my head under the water and somehow managed to endure this situation.

And, suddenly Milly stopped moving around and Claude was left breathing heavily.

[Milly-san? What's wrong?]

[.....Claude, your body's covered in scars...even though you're a girl]

Milly already knew that Claude's body was covered in scars. However, even if she knew it, when the hot water turned her skin red and the scars were laid bare, it was enough to stop Milly completely.

Even though Healing can cure most any injuries, one thing it cannot do is heal the scars left over.

Even though she knew that, it seems she tried Healing over and over.

How should I say, it seems like a very Milly-like thing to do.

[Oh, please don't worry about it Milly-san]

[That's impossible]

The large bath fell silent and then, *splash*, the sound of water echoed.

Claude put her hand on Milly's head and slowly patted her.

[Claude.....?]

[Zeph-kun taught me that, if I do this Milly-san will quiet down. Though I might be insufficient.....]

[Ohh..... that Zeph.....]

Claude continued to hug Milly and patted her head. And though Milly was confused at first she had now quieted down.

Though I hadn't meant to teach her something like that...

Ah well, it's fine. I'll let her do it this one time.

The two finally left, and I rose from the bath completely dizzy and red.

Damn.....everything's spinning.....

I somehow made it to my room and flopped onto my bed when, the energetic Milly and Claude barge in. I get the impression that they asked me about some perfume and played around or something and asked me questions, but I was too light headed to remember much.

Later on we heard that the large bath apparently had a time for men to bathe and a time for women to bathe.

When Milly heard this she started to question me relentlessly. My bath was really short and I got out quickly, so I wasn't in there when you girls took your bath; was my answer. Despite that, even now she still suspects me.

Shit, I won't be able to take my time and enjoy my beloved bath for a while now.

CHAPTER 38

SCREEN POINT, PART 1

The girls and I went shopping at the street booth plaza.

[First we need to go buy Claude a sword!]

In the fight a few days ago, Claude's sword had broken, and now she was currently unarmed.

Right now her scabbard only had the hilt of her horribly broken sword sheathed in it.

[No, I'm fine really.....]

[Of course you're not alright. Be that as it may, we don't have any leeway in our finances. So later I'll buy something appropriately cheap.]

[That's awful!]

Though it isn't great for Claude, right now there's something we need to buy even more.

[Putting that aside, could the both of you look for an armored knight card? I'd like you to find two of them for about 100,000 rupi or less each]

[100,000? And two of them!? Don't we only have 300,000 rupi? We're just gonna suddenly spend such a large amount of money?]

[Since we need it anyways. First we should prepare the most expensive and useful general equipment for our use.]

A card is a rare item that monsters drop that is extremely scarce and expensive. If you enchant equipment with them, many different effects can be achieved.

The armored knight card when added onto equipped armor (or clothes), gave the effect of reducing all damage by something like 20 percent, making it a card with some of the highest all-purpose usefulness when added to armor.

The armored knight's hunting ground was a popular spot for high level adventurers to hunt, so a fair number were being hunted, so the price wasn't too inflated.

[We'd buy three but we'd lose our funds for living, so we'll only get two this time. We'll enchant Milly and Claude's armor.]

[What about you Zeph?]

[Because Claude is the vanguard it's absolutely necessary for her, and Milly isn't yet good enough at moving around during battle. But I on the other hand, won't receive fatal damage if I conduct myself as I usually do]

[Even though you are always getting injured.....?]

[.....How annoying, I still haven't taken any fatal wounds, you know?]

In the first place I could use Safe Protection, even two people wouldn't be a problem. Claude seemed to sense the mood and changed the topic.

[Oh yeah! Milly-san, should we compete to see who can find the cards cheapest? The loser has to do one thing the winner says]

[Alright! I'll take you on!]

While I was picking a fight, Claude enjoys competition more.

The two of them energetically disappeared into the street booth plaza.

I myself went to look for a weapon for Claude.

Oh, there's a short sword for 5,000 rupi.

That's cheap.

Claude will have to settle for this for a while.

After all, the armored knight cards were 100,000 rupi each, but we were able to get them for 98,000 rupi each.

It ended with Claude as the victor.

Milly was frustrated at her bad luck, but once she understood that Claude had honestly bargained the cards' prices down, she admitted her defeat.

Claude is such a reliable person.

When we got back to the inn, we enchanted Milly's mini dress and Claude's plate with the cards. The equipment absorbed the cards and were given the 20% damage reduction effect.

[Is it alright to use such a worn out thing? Shouldn't we have put it on better defensive equipment than this?]

[Good defensive equipment is much more expensive than a card. For now, any equipment is good enough, when you add the armored knight card it'll become defensive equipment.]

If we find second-hand equipment at the stalls then it's all well and good, but without knowing who wore it or what it was used for, the two girls might not want to use it. For my part I'll find some quality second-hand goods and change their minds sooner or later.

[Oh yes Claude, could you go out with me a little later? I have some things I'd like to test.]

[I don't really mind though?]

[I'm coming too~!]

[Milly you clean up your luggage that you threw in my room. It's completely messed up...you need to throw out the unnecessary stuff or something but get it out of my room.]

[Aaawww~!]

[If you're gonna complain then put it all in your room.]

Milly pouts and puffs out her cheeks as she begins to clean up my room. We leave and move to a different location. Claude tried to help, but you can't spoil Milly like that. She needs to be able to clean up her own messes.

Outside the Town...

[There's a lot of things I'd like to hear about your Screen Point Claude. Could you please tell me about it?]

[I don't mind at all]

At that time, Kane had used his spell invalidation magic "Screen Point". If we can make use of this magic, then the number of hunting grounds we can utilize will increase.

[Screen Point is, as I said before, a magic that invalidates spells' effects. Though I say that, the magic's effect is dependent on the conditions and the person using it, my brother's Screen Point is usually able to eliminate almost all magic cast at him, but mine can only do about half.]

[Could you let me see you use it for a bit?]

[Sure it's fine]

Saying that Claude closed her eyes and began to silently cast her magic.

As she concentrated, I began to see some sort of thin, see-through membrane covering Claude's body. I reached out and touched Claude's body, and once I did my magical aura was shaved off in an instant.

Rather than blocking magic power, it was more like a magic that devoured magical power.

I cast Scout Scope on Claude.

Claude Leonhardt Magic Power Level ———

Certainly her Screen Point was weaker than Kane's. When I tried to cast Scout Scope on Kane, it didn't even activate.

[Now it's about time for me to fire some magic at you alright?]

[Wai-please stop! Painful things will still hurt me you know!]

[That was a joke]

Are you telling the truth? Is what her face seemed to be saying.

As I thought, it appears that it could only eliminate the effects of magic to a certain extent.

Claude released her Screen Point and she looked a little worn out.

It might be my imagination but, Claude's magical aura seems to be fairly depleted....

Perhaps..., I think and cast Scout Scope.

Claude Leonhardt

Level 26

[Red] Magic Value 9, Magic Limit 45

[Blue] Magic Value 5, Magic Limit 39

[Green] Magic Value 0, Magic Limit 40

[Sky] Magic Value 0, Magic Limit 47

[Soul] Magic Value 0, Magic Limit 51

Magic Power 149/456

Kane's magic power was only 39.

In other words, Screen Point was a magic that was usable with that level of magical power. Nevertheless, Claude's magic power had decreased by 300.

[Claude I'd like you to use ball]

[Ok]

[Could you let me see you fire five at that boulder over there?]

[That's fine]

Saying that she turned to face the rock, and cast Red Ball five times.

The rock only ended up slightly burnt with a few cracks in it.

Claude's magic level was low so this is all it would amount to.

I cast Scout Scope and when I looked, Claude's magic power was 50.

[Can you use Screen Point one more time?]

[Eeeeh~ I'm already tired though.....]

Even though she says that, Claude starts to cast Screen Point again.

This girl seems like the type who can't refuse a request.

As I think that, I cast Scout Scope on Claude again.

As expected, that's how it was.

Screen Point is a magic that increases in strength the less magic power you have.

In other words, the magics called "Mage Killers", are exactly what they sound like "magic that kills magic".

The effect is that the one who uses this magic, will in all likelihood be affected by the magic's effects as well. Therefore, there are very few mages who would use the "Mage Killer" magics, basically the only ones who would use this would be those who don't use magic in their occupations.

[Claude would it be alright if I fired one spell at you?]

[I already said you couldn't!]

[It'll be fine, it won't hurt at all. Do you think I'm lying to you?]

[Eeehh~? I, I said no~]

[Don't worry, I'll use my weakest one]

I say, and to lessen her nervousness I give her my best pretty boy smile and cast Blue Ball.

I let the ball standby above my right hand, and for some reason Claude seems incredibly nervous and is looking at me with unease.

Why?

I invoke Blue Ball, and even though it hits her directly, Claude, of course, suffers no damage.

How about that? I think as Claude stares at me in confusion and disbelief.

And I even told her not to worry.....

[Most likely Screen Point is a magic that when activated, is more effective the less magic power you have. Kane was born with very little magic power, so when he uses Screen Point he almost has zero magic. That's why he's almost invincible against magic.]

[Eeeh~How do you know something like that?]

[Uhh.....]

.....Ah crap, Scout Scope was supposed to be kept a secret.

Ahh whatever, Claude's already a close comrade.

She's already told me all about Screen Point, so I can't really keep on hiding it.

I explained Scout Scope to Claude and she seemed pretty surprised.

[Scout Scope.....Is it. It's a pretty terrifying magic.....]

[It's a secret]

[I understand. You can't teach this kind of magic to someone unless they're a friend or comrade.]

Well there was a certain dumb girl who bragged about this magic immediately after meeting me.

I'm just sayin'.

[Certainly my father said something like that. That if a person was weak in magic skills Screen Point would be more powerful.]

The Leonhardt family was a lineage of knights, so they probably hadn't experimented too much with magic.

[Also one more experiment. Could you put this on?]

I say that and hand her my worn out old clothes. Claude takes them with a confused expression.

[During the fight with Kane, Crimson Blade tore up his clothes, while my Red Crash didn't hurt him at all. I'd like to know the exact effects of this magic.]

By the way Safe Protection's 90% damage reduction has been applied to the equipment.

[.....In other words, you want to see if my clothes will rip if I'm using Screen point....right?]

[Yep]

Claude's face blushes red before my eyes and she cries out in a high pitched voice.

[Wha.....What are you thinking?! Zeph-kun you pervert!]

[No, that's why I had you change into my old clothes ok?]

[That makes you sound even more perverted!]

In the end Claude's extreme opposition ended the experiment before it started.

Even though it was a necessary experiment.....

CHAPTER 39

SCREEN POINT, PART 2

-Lake Shore-

We came to the lake shore that Milly had found previously to continue our Screen Point experiments. Here there were monsters that used magic to form a body out of water, they were called Aqua Elementals. Today, Milly also accompanied us.

[Milly, Aqua Elemental is a monster created from water, so the Blue Magic System won't work on it.]

[They're a level 2 attribute monster right?]

[These are a type of monster with a weak attribute and a strong attribute right?]

A monster born from an element (element is also the core magic and the source of the monster's image) like the Aqua Elemental was called a level 2 attribute, and magic from the same attribute would not work on it at all. However, these monsters' special traits don't give them an advantage, in fact for us mages it made them into sitting ducks. While one attribute is completely defended against, on the other side they have one attribute that they are extremely weak against.

[That's right. The attribute weaknesses go like this, Red>Green>Sky>Blue>Red, like that it would mean that the Aqua Elemental of the Blue trait would be weak against the Sky magic system.]

[I got it! I got it!]

Well, it is the basics of the basics after all. Be that as it may, this is Milly after all, so I have to make sure. Though looks might not be everything, this [indeed] appears to be a level 2 attribute monster.

As we were walking and chatting, the surface of the lake began bubbling and foaming, and the Aqua Elemental showed itself.

It took the form of a nude woman with long flowing hair, maybe this was to invite carelessness or even tempt unprepared people.

Sorry but in my eyes you only look like a target.

[Black Sphere!]

Air blades gather in the air above the Aqua Elemental, and they fall onto it ripping and tearing apart its head.

(—Too shallow huh?)

Sphere magic has superior power and range, but its invocation time is slow and it's hard to control, making it a difficult magic to use.

But if I think about the future, it might be good to train my Sphere magic from now on.

For now, if a strong enemy appears I'll use Pyro Crash, though because it has a short range it'll be hard to use on fast monsters, so it might not be particularly useful at times.

Also because I have low talent in the Red magic system, I should really only be using it as a last resort. I'm considering a substitute for Pyro Crash, I'm thinking about combining Black Sphere and Green Sphere. I'm not skilled in it yet so I'm not ready to brave giving it a test run.

As I was thinking, the Aqua Elemental that I'd cut up soon returned back to its original shape.

As I thought, it really is hard to control.

The Level 2 Attribute monsters mostly have indeterminate forms, unless you completely crush them they'll quickly reform.

They do sustain some damage, so if you continuously attack them you can beat them, though it's really inefficient.

[Zeph you suck at this~ ♪ Why don't I show you how it's done?]

.....such humiliation.

If you're going to say that much then why don't I have you show me then?

[Black Bullet!]

Milly stuck out her right hand and magic gathered around it. The magic power formed countless small bullets that fired out rapidly, and the Aqua Elemental was pulverized.

Black Bullet was a rapid fire version of Black Ball, it was an average magic even though it had high destructive power....that's because it's wasteful. It uses so much magic that most don't consider it anything but second class.

As always her fighting style is sloppy...but, unexpectedly this kind of [sloppy] fighting method, might suit the current Milly quite well. Milly was taught magic by her father, but Milly was and is childish and can't really grasp the fine details of magic usage.

Because of that, for now, a battle style and tactics that relies on selecting the correct high powered magic might not be a bad way for her to fight.

However, this forceful way of doing things is really only possible because it's Milly who has high natural talent, if a mage with meagre talents tried this they'd quickly run out of gas and collapse, and they'd be a useless mage that needed to be carried. I have to make sure to teach her not to do these kinds of things.....

As the Aqua Elemental dissipates, Milly looks back at me with a face brimming with pride. She gives me a triumphant peace sign (V sign) with her fingers.

A.....Annoying.....

[By the way Zeph-kun, didn't you say that there was something you wanted to do the other day?]

[Now that I think of it that's right. If I ask you, will you use Screen Point after decreasing your magic power like we did yesterday Claude?]

Leaving the proud looking Milly aside and continuing to talk, she looked kind of lonely and immediately dashed over to us and looked at our expressions.

You shouldn't have been like that in the beginning if you wanted us to keep you company.

Claude Leonhardt

Level 26

[Red] Magic Level 9, Magic Limit 45

[Blue] Magic Level 5, Magic Limit 39

[Green] Magic Level 0, Magic Limit 40

[Sky] Magic Level 0, Magic Limit 47

[Soul] Magic Level 0, Magic Limit 51

Magic Power 45/456

After using magic many times, I give the gasping and panting Claude the OK.

A use of Screen Point uses about 50 magic power. I overcame Claude's opposition to the experiment (she couldn't wear my old clothes, and instead removed the plate with the card enchantment), the results were that when Screen Point was used with magic power of about 50, then my 2nd grade magic was unable to damage her clothes in the slightest. Once I, against my better judgment, took advantage of an opening and fired a more powerful magic at Claude and succeeded in barely ripping her clothes. Though right afterwards Claude gave me quite the slap....

Without the equipment with the expensive card attached, I thought it would be obvious that something would break in that experiment.

It's not my fault.

Well that aside, Screen Point doesn't seem to protect anything other than the person's body completely. If a powerful enough magic is used then the equipment can be destroyed it seems. Crimson Blade destroyed Kane's equipment, this was probably due to it being combined with Claude's sword technique and gaining the power of a great magic spell.

[So what was it you wanted to do?]

[Could you go stand by the lake for a little while?]

The confused Claude goes and stands by the shore, Milly and I distance ourselves from Claude slightly.

[What are you doing Zeph?]

[Well, just watch]

Claude at first didn't understand what was going on and just stood there looking at the surface of the lake, a short while later she noticed something and took a large leap to the side.

Immediately after, a water hammer slammed into the place where Claude was just standing. I looked at the origin of the water hammer and saw the Aqua Elemental approaching out of Claude's line of sight.

[Claude! If the Aqua Elemental can't get close to you it will only use magic attacks! All you have to do is stay still don't dodge and you'll still be fine!!]

[Even if you say that, it's still scary!!]

Though she is right, it's finally a good chance to try the magic invalidation, I'm not gonna pass it up.

[Get used to it Claude!]

[Hiiiie!?!]

[demon.....]

As we talk the Aqua Elementals appear on the lake's surface and continue to shower Claude with water hammers. Once the number of attacks exceeds 5 it becomes practically impossible to dodge, Claude readies herself with her shield.

However, the shield placed directly in front of her can't protect her feet, head, or sides. The water hammers shower down on her from all sides.....

Screen Point was activated so the impact to her body was almost completely negated, but the water fell on the ground and splashed, causing Claude to get soaked in the blink of an eye.

[Black Bullet~!]

[Black Bullet]

Milly and I continue to exterminate the approaching group of Aqua Elementals.....

After exterminating them, I go to show my appreciation for the person who did the most this time around, Claude, who is absolutely soaking wet.

Her wet hair and clothes are sticking flat to her skin, and it emphasizes her slim body line.

She's shivering a little, even though it's early summer if you get that wet you'll be cold.

[Claude are you alright?]

[You're cruel.....]

[Umm....sorry, I'm reflecting on my actions.....but, I want you to become as accustomed to using Screen Point as possible. It's such a powerful and unique magic after all.....]

It's hard to use it often during hunting.....

However, thanks to Claude, we were able to earn quite a bit of experience.

How about I treat her to some juice on the way back?

CHAPTER 40

TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION

[Welcome back~]

When we got back to the inn, Lydia greeted us at the entrance. It seems like she'd been waiting for us to return.

[Lydia-san! You came over?]

[These, were finished]

She said and took out 4 badges from her cleavage.

Outrageous...where do you think you're taking those out from...

The small badges she took out had the "Blue Sky Hunters" emblem glittering and shining on them.

[[Ooohhh~!]]

Milly and Claude raise their voices in admiration. I don't yell out, but a sigh of admiration leaks out.

The hunter has a blue hat, blue clothes, and is nocking an arrow on a bow, it felt as if the hunter was about to fire at some prey, the brass badge was delicately and exquisitely made.

[Weelll~ this was the first time I made our guild emblem like this so I got really into and...somehow ended up pulling an all-nighter]

Ahahaha, Lydia laughed with a face a little more haggard than usual and dark circles under her eyes. It had been, after all, not even 3 days since we'd made the request, so it was no wonder.

[.....Thank you, Lydia. This was 70,000 rupis right?]

Milly said and took out some money from her pouch.

[It's fine! We're in the same guild yeah?]

[I want to pay even so!]

Milly forcefully pushed the money to Lydia. Lydia refused it, but Milly continued to push it back to her. As the two pushed the money back and forth between them, it ended with Lydia breaking down accepting the money.

[W~well.....Thanks Milly-chan!]

Lydia accepted it and smiled sweetly.

Milly stood there looking triumphant.

This is probably not really a victory.

[Huh? There's only 65,000 rupis here though....]

[Eh? No way!?!]

She rummaged around her bag, but no matter what she couldn't find the rest.

[....it looks like it's not there. Sorry....]

[Well this is more than enough. I'm happy enough with the thought]

[But if it's like that, then I would feel bad....]

Lydia's face looked as though she'd thought of something, and she began to smile broadly at Milly.

[.....Then the missing 5000 rupis, I'll have you pay it off with your body~]

[Eh?]

As Lydia finished her sentence, Lydia embraced her with all her might. She pressed Milly's body against her and sniffed her hair while groping her butt. She gropes and knocks down the bewildered Milly.

[W.....Stop it!.....di.....a.....aahhhnnn!]

[A~n holding Milly-chan feels the best~ ♪I want to hold her when I come back home every day and snuggle before falling asleep~ is that okay Zeph-kun?!]

.....why are you asking me?

It's obvious that it's no good.

After that Milly's groans and moans echoed around the room for a while, while I and a slightly red faced Claude listened.

[Ok! I have received my payment~ thank you for the treat Milly-chan ♪]

[.....yo.....you're very welcome.....]

A little while later, a deflated Milly who had been released stumbled unsteadily, her clothing and hair were in a horrible mess. Lydia, on the other hand, had a deredere(lovestruck) and blissful expression as she sniffed the hand she'd used to grope Milly with.

This girl is an absolute pervert.....

—Dining Area of the Inn—

At Lydia's suggestion the four of us decided to have our evening meal. These kinds of things can deepen our comradery, that being the case there is no reason to decline.

The dinner menu was bread and stew with lots of vegetables in it. The meal is simple but the amount is bountiful, it is more than enough to fill your stomach. The bread is served in the stew making the soggy and soft bread even more delicious.

Milly took her bread and broke it into smaller pieces and threw them into her mouth.

Claude used a knife, spoon, and fork to eat with elegance.

Those are some perfect table manners.

Lydia just stuffed as much food as she could as fast as possible into her mouth.

It looks like she's a merchant who values time over manners.

.....Well if I had to say, I am also the same kind of person as Lydia, so I can't really make a bad comment about her eating manners.

(By the way, is this the thing called telepathic communication? It's the first time I'm using it but it seems pretty useful)

(But without practice, it's difficult to.....nicate)

Lydia, with her mouth full, was unable to speak so she used telepathy to communicate. It seems that Claude can't use it very well, at certain points noise overlapped her voice. It might be strange effect from her Screen Point.

A while ago, Milly put magic into the badges that Lydia made, so Claude, Lydia, and I are already using the guild message. Milly and I created the guild using crystal rings and we were the first members, so even without the badges we could use the guild message.

(But with this.....I can join.....Milly-san.....and Zeph-kun's.....versation)

(Araa~ so it's only been the two of you using it till now ne~ I'm really sorry for breaking into the world just for the two of you, Milly-chan ♪)

[Huuhhh!? It's not really like that!]

Milly responds to the two who are silently giggling at her with a big shout causing the landlady and the other adventurers to look at us in confusion.

[The three of you should play when we get back to the rooms rather than out here. Though I don't really care myself.]

They finally noticed the gazes of the people around them, lowered their heads in embarrassment, and focused on their meals.

After we finished eating and cleaned up our dishes, we asked Lydia various things.

At this moment we were pretty much broke and we didn't have any good money making ideas, so Claude asked Lydia for ideas.

[That's true ~ Hunting bosses are also a good option.....But if a rare item doesn't drop, won't we be making a loss? In my perspective I think it would be better to hunt

for easier monsters that will still drop a decent rare item, and use that to create our weapons.....Or more like please get the materials for me! I will even buy it off you guys!]

[Ingredients.... small-rares huh. Though I don't really enjoy hunting for small things.]

[I like hunting for small-rares! I can feel my motivation going up]

Seems like Claude is like the common people.

Small-rares are when a regular monster sometimes drops a "rare" item, but in comparison to boss rare items these drop more often, therefore they're called small-rares.

[It's in the east, do you know about the Sunray Mountain Range?]

[Aah, that one?]

I point my thumb over at a mountain with its peak covered in clouds. The Sunray Mountain Range has the highest mountains on the continent, magic power gathers around it and it is a large dungeon spot. There are a lot of monsters that drop good items for weapons, they even drop ore or crystal small-rares.

[I wanted to go hunting there on my next break, does everyone wanna come with? I'll buy all the materials that appear]

[O-K~!]

Milly responds with cheer.

I guess we don't get any choice in the matter.

Claude looks at me and our eyes happen to meet. She makes a troubled face and laughs a little.

CHAPTER 41

SUNRAY MOUNTAIN RANGE

—Foot of the Mountains—

Today the four of us met up and came to the mountains.

We left in the morning on a horse-drawn wagon and arrived just before noon.

I could've teleported us over but, "since we have the opportunity we might as well enjoy the trip!", Lydia suggested, so we decided to get on a carriage.

If I teleported this distance I might've been on the point of collapse, they might've been taking my needs into consideration.

We weren't alone in the wagon, there were other adventurers in their own parties. The foot of the Sunray Mountains is a pretty popular hunting spot, so quite a few adventurers go there.

[Oooh~Amazing Zeph! Look at how tall the Sunray Mountains are~!]

[Milly is this the first time you've come to this mountain?]

[Mmhmm, I can see such beautiful scenery!]

[Zeph-kun you're even younger than me and yet you know quite a lot huh...]

[Welllllll, this is quite a famous mountain....]

[First of all, let's eat our lunches before we go out to hunt! Mmmm~ I'm starving~]

And so, we sat down near the wagon and ate our lunch. The driver and horses were near the watering hole and ate as well. Each day they take adventurers out this way and earn their living expenses.

The lunch that Lydia made was the Beruta town's specialty Taikoyaki, the two of them devoured the sweet delicious treats. The beautiful atmosphere of the mountains made Lydia's cooking seem even more delicious than usual.

By the way, Lydia herself was staring at Milly, who had her cheeks stuffed with taikoyaki like a chipmunk, with a love-struck deredere kind of face. I guess this was the reason Lydia gave Milly the largest one huh.....

After we finished eating, we went up the mountain path a little, and saw the adventurers that we were travelling with in a battle with some monsters. The foot of the mountains is home to a type of monster called Stonegell, it looks like a mix of rock and jelly. It is a type of monster that is pretty tough against physical attacks, but it doesn't usually attack others and it can drop ore and minerals, so beginners are advised to hunt them. Almost immediately, a stonegell wells up by Lydia's feet.

Let's see what'cha got.

Walking briskly

As the three of us notice the stonegell, Lydia ignores it and keeps on walking. Milly, looking very confused, casts Blue Gale and defeats the stonegell in one hit. And luckily it drops some dull iron, Claude places it in the bag while inquiring.

[Lydia-san, are we not going to hunt any stonegells?]

[Nn, yeah? Dull iron is normally sold in stalls, my aim is the Roc Bird]

[.....Roc Bird is a monster that appears at the summit right? Are you planning on going now?]

[I want to go halfway up the mountain and stay in a mountain hut for one night, then I was thinking of starting our hunt the next day.....oh, it would've been better if I told you that earlier right? Sorry! I don't usually party up with other people so I kinda.....if it's no good we can go back, ok?]

The three of us are standing there glaring at Lydia, who is apologizing.

Maybe it wasn't on purpose.....

[.....well I don't really care, but next time you had better tell us beforehand. And about the materials, this time you're buying them at a higher price.]

[Ohoho of course~ I'll give you some good service Boss♪]

She says this and rubs her hands together while squeezing her breasts between her arms.

This girl definitely did this on purpose.....

As expected of a greedy merchant, how underhanded.

Milly keeps glaring for a bit and then

[Zeph-kun is this really alright?]

[Though the Roc Bird is a pretty strong monster, level-wise it is about the same as an Aqua Elemental. There are also relatively few of them so we should be able to handle them one way or another.]

[We used Screen Point to nullify the magic of the Aqua Elemental and defeated them, so it's hard to tell how strong we are in comparison.....]

That's a pretty sharp comeback.

Ah well, we're already almost halfway up, let's find a few Roc Birds, and if we see that we can't fight them then we'll just leave. I say so to soothe Claude.

[Anyways let's go and take a look! If it's impossible then we just need to leave!]

Milly and I seem to be of the same opinion.

[As expected of Milly-chan! You understand me~]

As Lydia says that she tries to grab on to Milly, but Milly smoothly dodges.

Huh? Lydia's face seems to say as her hands grab onto nothing. She looks up at Milly who has a face filled with triumph. It seems like she's gotten used to the sexual harassment, so now she understands Lydia's patterns and was able to read her moves and dodge beautifully.

We are climbing the mountain (though I say that it's honestly a pretty gentle slope) slowly and leisurely while at times teleporting. On the way, there are some times when we see some monsters, because I need to conserve magic I don't fight. The view is good, so it'd be a waste to teleport the whole way.

[Blue Gale!]

Milly fires a big spell at a group of Stonegells.

As always she just forces her way through.

Well, it's fine anyways.

I thought that Milly's teacher just had a fighting style that wasn't really smart or stylish, but that was probably just prejudice, now that I think about it, her teacher's fighting style may not have suited her so she uses this one, and anyways this fighting style just doesn't suit me so I can't really come to any conclusions. The only thing I can say is that one needs to find a fighting style that suits them.

Though I say this, your teacher can have a huge influence. I have to admit, even my Time Square, was heavily influenced by my teacher's unique magic.

Though I'm embarrassed to say that.

As I was lost in my thoughts, a cry comes from the shadow of a rock and a long neck appears. A white head, red crest, and black-haired lines. It's neck stretches, and it stands up on its thick looking legs. When it does it seems to be even bigger than Lydia. It has sharp and curved claws and an equally sharp beak that seem to be able to tear people apart easily.

[That's....a Roc Bird]

[Alright! Let's do it~!]

[Blue Gale!]

The tornado hits the Roc bird head on, but it endures it and charges right over.

It quickly attacks with its claws and Claude takes the attack on her shield, Lydia sticks her hand between her breasts and takes out her bag from between them. She then proceeds to take out her great axe from the bag and she swings it.

.....but with a skillful movement of its neck, the Roc Bird dodges her big swing smoothly. Then it aims its cruel looking beak at Lydia who's unbalanced.

.....but another example of skillful movements is shown, this time by Lydia, she dodges and then at the same time kicks off of the Roc Bird's head.

.....she's as monstrous as ever.

Myself aside, Claude, who's nearby, seems quite surprised.

At this moment, it's movements have stopped.

I fire my magic at the temporarily stunned Roc Bird.

[Pyro Shot!]

The magic ball I shot, drills right into the Roc Bird, and it stops moving.

[Blue Gale!]

The magic tornado that Milly shot, surrounds the Roc Bird, and sends its body flying into the sky and it disappears.

CHAPTER 42

MOUNTAIN LODGE

After beating the roc bird, Lydia hit her palm with her fist as if she'd just thought of something.

[Nn~ This feeling.....could this be the feeling of leveling up?]

[Congrats Lydia!]

[Congratulations]

I secretly used Scout Scope and saw that Lydia's level was still around 13, it didn't appear to have gone up by very much. That should be pretty obvious as Lydia usually acts as a salesperson, minds her shop, and draws up designs instead of hunting usually. The roc bird is worth quite a lot of experience points so this time she was able to level up quite a bit.

[Hehe no~ you guys are all pretty strong. Big sis was surprised.]

[No, Lydia-san is also really.....strong.....]

[Yeah! *whistle* The enemy went BOOM and CRASH and you dodged.....anyway it's amazing!!]

Claude's confidence in being the vanguard seems to be tattered a bit, while Milly was waving her arms around to demonstrate how Lydia moved during the fight. Lydia's face immediately became pervy and love-struck (deredere).

Everything else aside, the roc bird was a pretty strong enemy. It not only has a pretty high level, but it's tough and moves quickly, it is a well-rounded monster.

[If two roc birds come I'd like Claude and Lydia to take them on, this should be the method of dealing with them. If three come, then I'll take Claude and Milly will take Lydia and run away using teleportation. For now let's go with this kind of plan.]

They all nod.

So in order to familiarize ourselves with the roc birds, we aimed to walk to the mountain lodge. We continued to walk leisurely up the mountain path.

[There are two over there]

Lydia pointed at two roc birds lying around in the bushes comfortably. I can't see very well because of the bushes blocking my view, so if we weren't moving this way I probably wouldn't have seen them.

[Blue Gale!]

Milly cast her magic and at the same time Claude and Lydia rushed out. According to plan, they each take one of them as their opponent. Claude should reach her opponent first...probably.

I cast Pyro Shot at the roc bird and hurt it while making it recoil. As expected combo magic with good range is much easier to use. Pyro Shot is a little lacking in power though, I should try a little more to develop some magic with both power and range. Recently we've been fighting a lot more tough enemies. Well if I spend some time then I should be able to come up with something.

[Blue Gale!]

By the time the second tornado hit the roc birds Claude and Lydia had already started fighting. In this way we continued to climb the mountain, a couple times we encountered some roc birds but we made pretty good progress.

As the sun started to set and the sky turned red, Milly's face was also pretty red, and she seemed to be pretty tired and sweaty. She was kind of stumbling and her eyes weren't focused on anything in particular.

The mountain path must be pretty hard on a child. Even more so because of the need to fight as we progressed.

Even so she has her pride, Do you want Lydia to carry you?, this suggestion was offered many times but it was always rejected.

I can walk fine on my own, so she says.

Claude has quite a bit of travelling experience, so even though she is carrying heavy equipment she doesn't seem extremely tired.

[Ooh I see the Mountain Cabin Milly-chan]

[Really!?!]

Suddenly Milly got excited and started to run.

Hey come on, it's dangerous if you start to run all of a sudden.

As I think that, the next second *Smack* she falls flat on her face. She immediately sits up, stops moving, and her shoulders start to shake.

Ah ah.....didn't I tell you.....

Lydia runs over to Milly's side, the Claude and I quickly follow.

–Mountain Lodge–

Inside the lodge there is a plain table and stool, a fire pit in the center, and a futon folded up in the corner.

[Let's stay here for the night]

[Ahhh I'm tired~]

[I'm also kind of covered in sweat. I want to wipe down my body, but.....]

She says and shoots a glance in my direction.

Get out, that seems to be the message.

Though I intended to do that from the beginning.

[When you're done call me]

I say so and leave the lodge.

Outside it's getting dark, but the roc birds don't move around at night so it should be safe.

As soon as I left, a great commotion started inside the lodge. It seems like the source of the disturbance was...Milly was about to change her clothes and Lydia wanted to help but she refused, then Lydia started chasing her.

What a ridiculous game.

Ah, Lydia sunk her poisonous fangs into Claude who tried to stop them.....

If I stick around here my heart and morals will be in danger....

I move away from the lodge and sit down upon an overhanging cliff. It's very close to dusk and the mountain wind blows and it feels like today's fatigue is being washed away.

Well, I wasn't really that tired anyways. While we were climbing, I used body reinforcement magic. It wrapped my feet in wind and raised my physical abilities, I used the Sky attribute magic, Black Boots. Also I used recovery magic Healing at the same time, so while my abilities were boosted, my body's burden was also reduced. When I combine two different support magics together, a new and improved effect is created.

[It's a magic that makes you feel like you're walking on air....I think I'll call it Wind Walk]

The magic usage and effect aren't very suitable for battle, and it doesn't have too many uses. By the way, I didn't use it on Milly because if you have it too easy while you're young your body will end up being badly affected. Mages, even at the best of times, don't move their bodies very much, in essence this kind of magic shouldn't really be used outside of battle.

Also, it's not that I'm wanting to take things especially easy by using this, I myself am working hard to experiment. When I think about how Claude and Lydia have joined, a magic that can boost physical abilities will definitely be useful. For this reason, I need to think of a couple different kinds of magic that I can use. For example.....

[Zeph!]

.....and Milly's voice has broken my train of thought. It looks like they've finished cleaning themselves up. Milly has a refreshed look about her as she puts her messy hair into order.

But really, it feels like all my alone time is disappearing. I feel like I've been spending quite a lot of time with Milly, I'll be training by myself and thinking, and suddenly Milly will just appear.

Come to think of it, I'm thinking about Milly and the others an awful lot. Only a little while ago I was thinking about how to use my magic to help out Claude and Lydia.

Hmmm.....recently, my goal to practice magic efficiently to the limit seems to be getting further away.....

Well, making the guild stronger and leveling up faster is in line with my goals but...I feel like I might be caring and thinking about these girls a little too much.....

[What's wrong?]

Milly interrupts my thoughts and stares into my face. Her face is way too close, and I freeze up. If we move our necks a little, we'd touch, god there's got to be a limit to how defenseless you can be.

I seem to have changed since I met Milly, and know that I think about it I think I've continued to change ever since. And the cause of this, Milly, is standing here staring right at me looking confused.

[It's nothing, I was just thinking about how I'd changed and gotten a little strange. That's all.]

[What are you saying Zeph? You've always been kinda weird. You know a lot about difficult stuff, you use special unique magic, and you say stuff like washi]
(washi=which is a form of saying "I" used by elderly men)

Milly says this and giggles.

So that's how it is.....she might be right, but she really said quite a bit huh.

I give a wry smile and scratch my head while remembering Milly's carefree smile.

CHAPTER 43

EARLY MORNING

—The Next Morning—

I awoke feeling chilly. I moved my body and saw that the sky outside was still dark. I shook a little, covered myself with a blanket and once again tried to go to sleep. However, it doesn't seem like I'll be able to sleep any longer.

[.....mornings on a mountain are pretty cold huh]

Now that I look over, the three of them are all hugging each other and sleeping in a kind of pile, it looks pretty warm and comfortable.

.....wait, that's not right.

When I look more closely, Lydia is crushing the both of them in her arms, Claude and Milly have a somewhat painful look on their faces.

Lydia's face seems really happy because she has a flower in each hand. (A beautiful girl on each arm)

The three of them seem warm, so I put on my coat and go outside.

I've finally found some time to myself. Shouldn't I use it to train my magic?

When I get outside, I hear the sounds of birds calling in the distance.

Are the Roc Birds starting to wake up? How about I go look for them a bit?

Oh yeah, this is the first time in a while that I've gone hunting by myself.

Well from the start I prefer solo-hunting. I've had to go hunting around with the guild, so little by little I've gotten used to it, but when there are too many people hunting you lose a certain tension, and it gets boring pretty quickly. If you get too used to slacking off or having it easy, somewhere along the way you'll lose your drive. It's that kind of thing.

A mage has a weak body and when they're alone they need to both attack and defend. This makes solo hunting as a mage quite dangerous.

However, magic is a deep and profound art, if you prepare for all kinds of circumstances there is always some way to [withdraw] safely.

If you do the very best action, at the very best time and you continue to do so, then theoretically no matter the opponent you should be able to win.

I cast Safe Protection, and begin to teleport.

First I should start by searching nearby. In the areas right next to the cabin there are very few monsters.

I teleport and meditate while I look around, and once I confirm whether there are any monsters about, I move on.

After I've moved a couple of times, I catch the shadow of a Roc Bird from the corner of my eye.

I'm still pretty far away from it, so it hasn't noticed me yet.

This is great, let's try this out.

I cast Time Square, then as time slows I cast Black Sphere and Green Sphere.

[.....Gu.....!?!]

The moment I activate the magic in both my hands, I find that I can't aim at the roc bird's location very well, making my aim inaccurate.

I try to readjust but I can't do it very well.

To raise my accuracy, I do as I normally do, but the aim I had imagined was greatly shaken. I still hadn't gained proper control of the magic by the time it fired.

Voom.....and a pitch black sphere of magic appears on a boulder far from the roc bird.

The magic ball hits the boulder. It is chipped, shaved, and crumbled. By the time the spell finishes quite a bit of it has been consumed.

It didn't stop at the destroying the rock, it swallowed the morning mist and a large amount of dust and dirt, before finally disappearing with a small explosive sound.

The aftermath was half the ground and a boulder were gouged out completely.

By how cleanly it broke the rock, the sharpness and strength of the attack is easily visible.

[Haaaa haaaaa.....Damn it, it's really hard to control.....]

I lay spread eagle on the ground, panting miserably.

Sphere type magic has good power and range, however, it is really hard to control.

Especially using Green and Sky types that are originally difficult, this raises the degree of difficulty even higher.

It's embarrassing to say, but in my past life when I learned how to use magic more proficiently, I stopped using these two magic types.

It seems like this is what I get for slacking off.

Inside of Time Square I can multiply power and combine magic but the cost of each spell doubles. It also looks like the difficulty of controlling the magic also doubles.

If I'm not wrong, even though magic ball originally has a long range, the [magic range] attribute should also have doubled.

So I don't forget later, I cast Scout Scope on myself.

Zeph Einstein

Level 36

[Red] Magic lvl 30/62

[Blue] Magic lvl 25/87

[Green] Magic lvl 28/99

[Sky] Magic lvl 29/89

[Soul/Spirit] Magic lvl 29/97

I used 1000 already.....that's absurd.

However, the power and range correspond with the consumption.

The problem is control.

As I raise the level of Black Sphere and Green Sphere, I'll somehow reach the point where I can use them well I think.

A mass of wind pressure that crushes and pulverizes, it annihilates, and anything it consumes seems to disappear like it's being crushed by gravity.

[I think I'll call it Gravity Sphere]

I'm not able to use it normally yet.

For now, I check my surroundings and begin to meditate.

Now that I've recovered to some extent, I'll continue to accompany that roc bird from before. As I meditated, I measured the distance between us, and made sure that I didn't lose sight of it.

I don't have much time till everyone else wakes up, so I can't waste my time looking for another enemy.

I aim at it just as it reaches the very edge of my range.

[Black Sphere]

I aim at the roc bird's body, and a whirlwind appears in the correct place...but, it had already moved from the center of the whirlwind, and it began to charge using its strong legs.

[Black Sphere sucks in air pressure from the surroundings and uses wind to cut things continually. It's not so easy to escape from it.]

It has taken some damage, but it's pretty tough I see.

It doesn't care about its injuries and has already shortened the distance between us by half.

With this kind of fast enemy, it's impossible to escape on foot.

I cast Red Wall.

Right before the roc bird stabs through me with its beak, a pillar of fire erupts before my eyes and repels the roc bird.

The only type of wall magic with offensive capabilities, Red Wall.

This pillar of fire will burn, repel, and stop any enemy that touches it.

However, this effect doesn't last for long, now when I have the chance to burn it.....!

I was about to cast Pyro Crash, but then I thought.

What would happen if I use wall type magic and Gravity Sphere at the same location? This sort of magic decreases in accuracy the greater the distance.

.....Shall I try it a little?

The moment that Red Wall breaks, I teleport away.

The roc bird lost sight of me for a moment, but soon chased after me with great speed.

I leisurely walk around while meditating and when it gets close I teleport.

I continue to teleport around without letting the monster lose sight of me.

As I continued to do this, nearby roc birds all started to gather and chase me, now I have five roc birds chasing me around.

However, they're pretty spread out.

If I can't get them all gathered in one place it'll be troublesome.

I aim a short distance away and cast Red Wall, the flame wall repels the roc bird in front.

But the roc birds that followed it caught up and charged the wall together and broke it in a moment.

But, they're finally all gathered together.

[Gravity Sphere, Lock]

I aim at my feet and cast Gravity Sphere.

Right before my eyes, the group of 5 roc birds charge straight at me.

They stick out their claws to rip me apart.

I teleport, and head to the top of a cliff.

[.....Crash]

At that moment, as they lost sight of me, the confused roc birds gathered in a group, then a pitch black magic sphere appeared. The magic enveloped 2 roc birds immediately and annihilated them completely.

The remaining roc birds immediately distanced themselves, seeing that their partners were beaten, they escaped at top speed.

[The area of effect is pretty small and it takes time. I guess I have to say that this magic is not very efficient huh....]

The scattered roc birds returned to the earth, and when I glanced around I noticed the morning sun climbing through the sky.

Milly and company have probably already gotten up.

I should start heading back to the lodge now huh?

CHAPTER 44

ENHANCEMENT

When I got back to the lodge, Lydia and Claude were making breakfast. The rich scent of Miso Soup was floating through the air.

Even before we'd left, Lydia had stuffed various vegetables into her bag. As I suspected, she planned to stay over right from the start.

As expected of a shady merchant.

[Welcome back Zeph-kun] [You wake up early huh, on the other hand look at Milly-chan.....]

Lydia looks amazed as she points at Milly, who is still snoring and drooling.

She's as weak as always in the morning.

I give a wry smile while looking at her as she turns over and continues to snore.

[Is there anything I can help with?] [It's fine, it'll be done soon] [Yep yep, just take it easy]

The two of them kindly refuse, and since I have nothing to do I guess I'll mess around with the still sleeping Milly.

I poke her cheek, and her face looks a little unhappy as she turns it away and twists her body. I don't mind it and keep on poking her, and she continues to roll and roll away.

This is kinda funny.

Lydia is showing great interest in the state of affairs over here, her eyes have gotten big and she is staring fixedly.

In her hand she is gripping a kitchen knife and is rhythmically cutting vegetables.

Look at what you're doing, Look!

Then a little while later,

[Zeph-kun, Milly-san, breakfast is ready] [Milly wake up it's morning] [Nnnn~I'm up~]

She says as she raises her arms.

'Pull me up', is probably what she means.

What a needy fella.

[Aa.....]

As I come around to Milly's front, I hear Claude start to say something.

Hesitantly I grab Milly's hands, she grips on and completely lets her weight settle on my arms.

[Uo!?!]

I lose my balance and end up right on top of Milly.

Before I even noticed it, both her arms had wrapped around my back and she held onto me tightly.

[Ehehe~ Good morning Claude~]

It looks like she's mistaken me for Claude.

She hugs me and snuggles her face into my chest.

At this turn of events I can see Lydia's jealous face.

It looks like she's saying 'I'll do it next time'

[.....Nn? Somehow today, isn't Claude's body kinda harder than usual?]

*Pat**Pat* she goes. Milly rubs my back.

[Are you still half-asleep Milly?] [Eh.....huh? Ummm.....Zeph?]

Milly separated herself from me, opened her eyes, and confirmed that it was me. Then as she looked at me her face got bright red, then....

Thump!

And she head-butts me and starts to bite at me with all her strength.

While I'm in pain she goes, Why is Zeph here!? Idiot! Hurry up and get out! And such.

It looks like she is actually still half-asleep.

After we eat breakfast and go outside the weather seems to have cleared up.

There are few clouds and the earth stretches out before us and we can feel the sun shining down on us.

[It's so nice out huh~?]

As Lydia stretches, her big breasts assert themselves as they jiggle and sway.

When Milly sees this, her face seems to get a little depressed.

[B.....By the way, shouldn't we start climbing again?]

Claude guesses what's going on and changes the topic.

What an attentive fella.

[That's ri-ght, if we climb some more to a more open place, roc birds are often there, so let's get going.]

Lydia lifts her right hand as if to say let's do it, and once again her breasts shake grandly.

—Meadow near the top of the mountain—

[Waa~ This is so nice~] [Yep, the wind feels great~♪]

Milly closes her eyes, spreads her arms, and enjoys the wind blowing through the meadow with her whole body.

Indeed, the wind feels good when it strokes my cheeks.

[It's a good place right? In the past, my family used to come here pretty often]

To have a picnic in a place where strong monsters show up often....it seems like her entire family is just as monstrous.....

[Shhh!]

Lydia puts her finger to her lips, and everyone quiets down at this signal.

There are 2 roc birds hanging about in the grass, we're pretty far away so it doesn't look like they've noticed us.

[What should we do Kuro-chan?] (Nickname for Claude...it'd be Clau-chan but Japanese pronunciation makes it Kuro-chan)

[I will take the one on the left and Lydia-san please take care of the one on the right]
[Alright] (she says it cutesy)

[Both of you wait. There's something I want to try]

As Lydia looks at me confused, I cast Time Square.

With time stopped I cast Black Boots twice and Lydia's feet are covered in wind.

[Ohhh!? It kinda feels like my body got lighter?]

Black Boots enhances the physical abilities of the target and since it's been cast twice simultaneously, the power has risen even higher.

However, inversely the time it can remain active shortens by quite a bit.

[This is fun!]

*Hop*Hop* she hops twice, then a third time, in the next instant she kicks off the ground and appears almost instantly in front of the roc bird and it gets blown backwards.

[How fast!?]

Milly is surprised and looks at Lydia who's still in the air. Before we noticed it, she took out her axe and is gripping it with both hands. The remaining roc bird shoots its neck forward to stab Lydia with its beak.

But, at that moment Lydia disappeared, and reappeared at the roc bird's feet, she then hauls back and swings at the roc bird's feet as hard as she can.

Flinching, the roc bird stumbles.

[Blue Gale!]

The whirlwind/waterspout that Milly calls forth batters the roc bird, and taking advantage of this, Lydia once again strikes with her axe.

Her movements are like a whirlwind.

I can't see her moving at all.....it looks like I raised her speed a little too much.

[This is the enhanced version of Black Boots huh. It looks like it's too difficult for me to master] [As I thought, it looks pretty harsh]

This magic raises your speed but, you can't really figure out when the effects will stop. If the effects stop in the middle of an enemy's attack, rather than the magic helping you dodge the strike, you'd be more liable to get hit.

Even so, it looks like Lydia will somehow be able to handle it, but it's too difficult for me and Claude to utilize this.

[Attack enhancement and Defensive enhancement would probably be better I think, huh?] [Claude why don't go give Attack enhancement a try?]

I cast Time Square, and then Red Glove twice, and Claude's arm is covered in flame.

[Amazing.....I can feel strength overflowing.....!]

Claude rushes over to the roc bird and swings her sword.

[Teyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!]

The sword seems to cut right into the roc bird's body, but *Ba kin!!* a sound echoes and it breaks.

[It can't be!?!]

It was a cheap sword without enchantment, so it couldn't endure Claude's enhanced strike.....

It seems like synthesized Body enhancement magic really does choose it's own user.

She somehow managed to dodge the roc bird's counterattack and forces it back with her shield.

[Blue Gale!]

Milly's magic explodes, and the two roc birds are crushed.

[Oh I think my level went up?] [Congrats!] [.....Lydia-san, didn't it just go up yesterday?]

Lydia is only level 14 still.

It's very likely that it will still continue rising.

CHAPTER 45

ASSAULT

A little while after we beat the roc birds, Lydia's enhancement magic ended, and a little while after that, Claude's did as well. The enhancement time was about 2 minutes and the magic consumption was about 300. Looks like it only lasts as long as a single battle.

[The magic usage is pretty big and the length of the effect is short, it looks like it isn't usable very often]

[Ehhh~ Even though it was so much fun~]

[My sword.....it broke.....again.....]

Both of them are disappointed.

Though the cause of this is completely different for both of them.

Looking around while meditating, I see things moving around here and there.

It seems like these meadows have quite a few roc birds living here.

[Looks like it wouldn't be good to advance carelessly]

[Because we have a good view point a surprise attack shouldn't be a problem, but the roc birds are really fast]

It'd be bad if they surround us.

There's no need to be overly cautious though.

[I will move to the front. I have great confidence in my eyesight]

Lydia thumps her chest and we leave the vanguard to her as we slowly advance.

We completely ignore the stone gels at our feet.

Suddenly Lydia stops in front and puts up two fingers in a peace sign.

There are two roc birds, I think she means.

[Let's do it]

I murmur, and they nod.

In the distance, far enough that you'd strain your eyes, there are 2 roc birds relaxing under a tree.

It's really well done that she managed to see them at such a distance.

There aren't even any roc birds in our surroundings.

We carefully approach, and once we enter the right range I cast Time Square.

In the time manipulation I cast Black Sphere and Green Sphere at the same time.

[Gravity Sphere]

The magic activates and I aim for the roc birds' coordinates, and murmur.

[Lock]

As I let out my voice, I target them with my index finger. With this my aim improves, if you designate a target by aiming like this, the accuracy can be raised. When I was a beginner and I couldn't aim very well, my master taught me this to improve my accuracy.

[.....Crash]

I flick my finger up and the magic activates (like a finger pistol), and right before the two roc birds a pitch black magic sphere appears. The roc birds realize the situation and immediately split up to dodge, but one of them was being drawn into the magic.

It braced its legs, but soon enough it was engulfed by the magic. With a billowing sound it was destroyed and crushed.

Smaller and smaller the magic sphere shrunk until.....

Along with the disappearance of the magic, one roc bird was completely erased.

Even though there was quite a distance between us, I somehow managed to hit it straight.....as I breathed out a sigh of relief, the remaining roc bird charged us at incredible speed.

[Blue Gale!]

It broke through the whirlwind that Milly created and attacked with its sharp claws.....

DING!

Claude stood in its way and received the blow on her shield.

Lydia swung her axe at full power at the off-balance roc bird's head.

The roc bird fell dizzy at my feet with its head all confused.

It's a chance.

I aim my open palm at the body of the roc bird and chant my magic within a second.

[Green Crash]

The earth cracked and split where the roc bird was lying.

Green Crash can only really be used when close to an enemy, but the power of the other Crash type magic can't be compared to it. If the hand to hand combat skill of the mage isn't high enough, it makes it very difficult to use on stronger monsters, chances like this are rare, so when I can use it I will.

Also, when I use such powerful magic and unleash such destruction, I look pretty cool.

——Oops, as I was being silly the roc bird counterattacked.

As soon as I got away, Milly attacked the roc bird with Blue Gale, it was ripped apart and destroyed. After the tornado subsided, there was something left glittering there.

[It looks like a roc bird's claw, huh]

Lydia hoisted up the claw and tossed it to me.

I couldn't catch it too well and I bobbled it around a bit before grasping it.

[Is it okay for me to be carrying this?]

[Well, in all honesty, my bag is pretty full at the moment. Don't worry, I'll properly buy it from you later.]

At some point she had picked up enough that her bag was almost full, isn't that a bit too fast?

As expected of a merchant.

Roger that, I put the roc bird claw inside my own bag.

It's considerably hard, if you cut down its size would it turn into a knife blade or a spear tip?

[Ohh~ My level went up~]

[Congrats~ ♪]

At the honest praise from Milly, Lydia blushed.

Then Claude moved close to me and whispered into my ear.

[.....Zeph-kun, you can see levels with Scout Scope right? Is it possible that Lydia-san's level is really low?]

[There are some things it's better you don't know]

[.....I suppose so]

Lydia's level is lower than Claude's by about 20, but it's better to keep that a secret I think.

If you're hunting with Lydia, it might be better to forget about levels altogether, though it's a little late to say this.

We continue to hunt roc birds while advancing carefully and searching for enemies.

When there are two of them, we just fight as we always do. If there are three of them, I use Gravity Sphere from a distance and as long as I hit at least one of them we begin to fight.

If I miss, then Milly teleports us away.

For now, it looks like my accuracy is at about 50% or so.....

As I'm thinking while I walk, Lydia's movements stop.

I wonder what's wrong.

As we become cautious behind Lydia, she looks carefully from left to right, then slowly looks up into the sky.

——Shit!!!

[Everyone! Above us! Get outta the way!]

I say and grab at Claude's hand, as she is the closest to me, and cast teleport.

[Milly-chan!]

At the moment we teleport, Lydia dives towards Milly.

Immediately after that a ㄢ shaped shadow dives down from the sky causing a cloud of dust.

——-*Flap* and the giant wings shake and cause a great wind to blast making the tall grass tremble and dance wildly.

As the dust settles, a clear ㄢ shaped red silhouette appears.

This huge shape has 4 long wings growing from it, a long beak, with a red, white and yellow crest that looked beautiful. It seemed somehow divine.

The Sunray Mountains' top boss. It was the Sunny Raven! It spread its wings across the sky and let out a piercing cry.

CHAPTER 46

SUNNY RAVEN, PART 1

*Whoosh*Whoosh* the Sunny Raven flapped its huge wings shaking its feathers and making the surrounding plants dance wildly in the wind. A little later the wind reached us, we were enveloped by the torn earth and grass making it extremely difficult to keep our eyes open.

Even so I pried my eyes half open and looked towards the monster and saw Lydia covering Milly with her body while they lay on the ground. They both seem to have lost consciousness but Lydia had unhesitatingly shed blood to protect Milly.

[Milly-san! Lydia-san!]

[Wait Claude!]

I grabbed Claude's shoulder as she was about to rush over to them and somehow managed to hold her back.

You...you do know you're unarmed right?

I cast Time Square and cast Black Boots 2 times inside it.

When I released it, swirling whirlwinds clad Claude's feet.

[Black Boots Double]

I cast Time Square again then cast both Blue Weapon and Blue Crash at the same time.

The broken sword in Claude's hand started to grow a water blade, and the sword reformed.

[Aqua Blade]

——It seems like I'm almost completely out of magic, but I have enough for one more!

[Spirits of the Earth, Become a Suit of Armor to Protect This Body]

[Safe Protection!]

[Thank you very much!]

Each moment being precious, as soon as the casting finished, Claude launched herself forward.

I followed as well.

[Listen ok!? As soon as you receive a blow or an attack, Safe Protection will come apart so immediately return! If you're not close enough I won't be able to heal you!]

[I understand!]

She says this as her eyes continue to stare straight at the fallen Milly and Lydia without wavering.

Tsk.....do you really understand?

Before she goes too far I talk to Claude via telepathy.

(I'll give you a signal about 10 seconds before the effects of Black Boots Double ends. Once I do, by all means you must withdraw! Got It!?)

I think she heard me, but she didn't respond.

Now that I think about it, Claude isn't very good at using telepathy.

When I thought about trying it once more, Claude had already closed in on the Sunny Raven in an instant.

Damn it, anyway I'll somehow manage!

[Teyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!]

The blue blade attacks and it looks like a moon has been drawn by the slash as the Sunny Raven defends with its wing.

It bites into the wing and feathers go flying everywhere.....but that is where the blade stops.

—As I thought it's really hard!

A boss has powerful magical defenses and is composed of immense magical power.

An average attack will most likely not be able to break through these magic defenses, and will be unable to break through the monster's body.

Rustle.....Claude tries to pull the blade out of the wing, but the tough flesh and feathers that covered the wing prevented her from doing so.

She kicks at where the sword is stuck and it shakes and trembles, but still refuses to come out.

[Daaaammnnnnn iiiiiitttt!]

In order to shake off the groaning Claude, the Sunny Raven, easily lifts its wing, and swings itself from side to side with all its strength.

The Sunny Raven's strong legs spun around and around making its large body spin while moving its wings in an arc to scrape them along the ground.

As the Sunny Raven kicked up a huge cloud of dust, it disappeared from sight.

How did this happen? I have no idea what the situation is.

But, I don't stop and thrust myself into the swirling cloud of dust.

I immediately cast Scout Scope.

Sunny Raven
Level 77
Magic Power 151345/220580

I wonder if someone started fighting it immediately after, it's pretty hurt but right now that doesn't matter. Inside the dust cloud, neither of us can confirm the other's location, but while using Scout Scope's readout, I can confirm the Sunny Raven's movements using its silhouette. It closes up its wings and I leave the dust cloud and watch carefully.

[Green Sphere, Set]

Whispering and murmuring, a glowing green magic sphere appears on standby. Then I retreat from the dust cloud and move to the back of the Sunny Raven, I activate the Green Sphere that's been on standby.

It enters the dust cloud, the Sunny Raven stabs its beak at the shadow which just appeared, but too bad that wasn't me.

When Green Sphere hits that beak, it slowly turns and drags the raven's large body to the ground.

With a cracking sound, the Sunny Raven's head is slammed onto the ground.

Now before it's too late...!

Behind it, the dust cloud dissipates and I run towards the fallen Lydia and Milly. I only have enough magic left to teleport. I lower my body and try to make as little sound as possible as I advance.

I barely dodge the leg of the struggling Sunny Raven and reach out to the two unconscious girls.

Reach!

And the giant figure's movement stops, suddenly the surroundings get dark.

I raise my head carefully to look, and my gaze meets the Sunny Raven's golden eyes.

Kiyurururururu.....it makes an unpleasant sound as it takes aim at me.

Did it eliminate Green Sphere with sheer strength?!

Boss's really do have powerful magic resistance.

Therefore, magic that is usually very powerful can't, in many cases, showcase its full power, status effect magic might even have their effects invalidated.

It bends its neck and aims at me, then strikes with all its strength.

———but, this is within my assumptions as well.

The incredibly fast downward blow, made the wind howl as it approached us.

CLANG a metallic clank resounded, and the Sunny Raven's beak slams into the ground. Before us Claude is posed with her shield after redirecting the attack.

When Claude was unable to pull out the Aqua Blade, I let the blade shrink, at which point it was easy to pull it out.

Then as soon as Claude pulled out the Aqua Blade, I conveyed my movements to her via telepathy, and requested support.

[Daa!]

Claude pummels the Sunny Raven with her shield.

During that gap I rush over to the two on the ground.

.....Thank goodness, somehow they're safe.

[That's enough! Come here Claude!]

[I understa.....]

As Claude was responding the Sunny Raven's eyes glint and shine, and flames leak from its beak.

It pulls as hard as it can and pulls its beak out of the ground and opens its jaws wide.

In the dark depths of its throat a small flame appears for a moment, then grows as it bursts towards Claude.

— Red Barrett!

The flame shot engulfs Claude in an instant, and then continues to fire. The powerful torrent of flames seems to raise the temperature of the surroundings.

[Claude!]

(....kay. I am.....ight ok.....Milly-sa.....and Lydia....n.....)

It seems like she activated Screen Point at the last second.

Anyway I'm relieved.

Nonetheless, these flames are hard to approach.

I ought to look after the collapsed Milly and Lydia.

My magic power is almost completely gone.

Claude is using Screen Point and Black Boots Double should still be active for a while.

Which means there's one thing I should do.

Leave this area to Claude, take these two and retreat.

That is the most efficient way....of...doing...things.....but!!!

Damn it!!!!

I punch the ground and regain a little bit of my composure.

(.....I'll be right back. Don't die on me Claude.)

(Right!)

I have nothing else to say when I hear Claude's heroic response, and I use the last of my magic to cast teleport.

CHAPTER 47

SUNNY RAVEN, PART 2

[.....ly!.....Milly! Get it together Milly!]

[.....n..nya?]

After I called her over and over, finally Milly's eyelids opened.

Lydia hasn't stopped bleeding and shows no signs of waking up.

[.....huh? Zeph what's wrong?]

Kyoton(Astonished SFX) Milly looks at me vacantly and it seems like she doesn't understand the situation at all.

[Hurry and cast healing on Lydia!]

[Huh? Ummm.....!?!]

Seeing the blood covered Lydia, Milly's expression instantly changes.

She rushes over to Lydia and begins to cover her in Healing magic.

[The boss pounced on and assaulted us. Lydia covered you when you fainted, and now Claude is facing it alone]

[.....!]

I reported the desperate situation and she gasped.

When I heard it coming out of my own mouth, it even made me feel like crying.

[.....Is Claude ok?]

[It's tough]

Milly blanched and focused on speeding up her healing.

However, when I said “it’s tough” I meant “it’d be tough for her to do it alone”.

If I go, then I should be able to handle it one way or another.

.....but, shit...

My magic is still hasn’t even recovered to 20% as of yet, because I’m in such a rush and my calm has been disrupted, I can’t meditate properly.

It can’t be helped, even though this goes against my nature.....

I bend myself over the unconscious Lydia’s stomach, stuck my hand up through the bottom of her clothes, and felt around.

[Wh-wh-wh, What are you doing at a time like this Zeph?!]

[Sh-shut up fool! Even I didn’t want to have to do this if I didn’t ha.....there it is!]

I pull out Lydia’s bag from between her breasts. I stick my arm into it and grab the Magic Recovery medicines from inside it, then I drank.

While I was drinking I cast Time Square, then Healing twice.

The healing light layered on top of Milly’s and brightened further, Lydia’s horrible complexion became a little healthier.

But, it seems like she still hasn’t regained consciousness. I’ve already taken many magic recovery medicines and even my pocket has some stuffed inside.

[I’m going back to give Claude back up. Milly, I’ll leave Lydia in your care. Be careful of the roc birds around here.]

[O, Okay]

I cast teleport to return to Claude’s position. The battlefield is quieter than it was before, and I can’t help but get a bad feeling about this.

When I teleport back to Claude the fight seems to be nearing its end.

One of the Sunny Raven’s wings is cut, shredded, and dyed red with blood.

Its beak is cracked and chipped in several places. The tip of the battered beak is wet with blood and Claude's body is inside it.

Her body is dangling loosely from the beak. She isn't moving at all, not even a twitch.

[*CLAUDE!*]

The Sunny Raven turns toward me as it hears my scream and begins to growl.

The moment I see the Sunny Raven's emotionless face, the entire world is dyed in blood red.

[.....*Kill*]

I face the Sunny Raven and prepare for battle as magic floods out of my body. The moment I cast Time Square to utilize Gravity Sphere, Claude's hand twitched in response to my voice and she moved.

Thank goodness, somehow she's still alive.

However, I still want to kill this bastard.

I aimed at the Sunny Raven and magic gathered in my hand.

[Gravity Sphere.....Lock]

I have to quickly save Claude from that evil bird's beak.

At that moment the Sunny Raven opened its beak wide to swallow Claude.

[.....Crash!]

I aimed at the scruff of that thing's neck and invoked Gravity Sphere.

The magic sphere appeared and warped the space around it, dragging the thing's body in while distorting it as it let out a creaking, crunching sound.

[Gururururururu eeeeeeeee!!]

It let out a cry as it tried to endure, it opened its beak wide and released Claude, who fell towards the ground. I managed to teleport fast enough to catch her.

Claude dropped from a considerable height, and when I caught her my arms received quite a shock, strong enough that it felt like my arms were going to fall off.

[Heavy...!]

I was supposed to catch her all cool and suave, but I let out a groan and spoke without thinking.

As expected, my strength has fallen back to how it was as a child.

It looks like I'll have to train myself once again.

[.....That's horrible of you.....to say you're heavy to a girl.....]

Holding onto consciousness, Claude whispers this while smiling slightly.

So she heard that just now...

[.....the armor is heavy]

I played it off with all my might, but she smiled and it seemed like she'd seen through it.

Tsk, this isn't over.

I smiled wryly as I held Claude in my arms and was about to teleport away, but it looks like things weren't going to work out like that.

The Sunny Raven's eyes shine sharply, it is forcefully pushing Gravity Sphere down and attacking me with its wing.

By chance it misread the distance and when I jumped back I was barely able to dodge.

I cast teleport, but I can't activate it properly.

The Sunny Raven is getting close, and I'm carrying Claude.

It takes more concentration to use teleport, I need to calm down or I won't be able to use it.

Sensing my flustered mental state, Claude whispers in a small voice.

[Zeph-kun, leave me.....]

[Are you a fool? If I planned to abandon you then I wouldn't have come to save you in the first place]

[I guess so.....]

Claude grabs onto my clothes.

[Hold on tight]

[.....ok]

I cast Time Square while embracing Claude.

Inside the time suspension I cast Black Boots twice and activate it.

My feet are surrounded by wind and I run with all my might.....but, the weight of two people lowered the speed more than I had thought.

The reason for this is physical enhancement magic largely depends on the subject's initial physical abilities.

[Jump to the left please!]

I react to Claude's voice and jump left, and a large yellow beak passes to my side.

The Sunny Raven creates gusts of wind as it stabs down.

If I get hit by something like that, even if I have Safe Protection, it won't end without injury.

The wind pressure breaks my balance slightly and I quickly look to the side, and see at the end of a long neck, a big bird's head looking at me and smiling.

No, it's flame leaking from the beak, that's what that expression means.

—Red Barre.....[Pyro Crash]

The spiraling flames that I blasted forth, smashes the Sunny Raven's jaws open, and it engulfs the Red Barrett as the spiral continues to grow.

[_____!!]

The smashed beak of the Sunny Raven issues a mute cry as the flames spread to its head and neck.

Now when I have the chance....!

The appearance of the Sunny Raven's wrecked body, gives the feeling of a fallen king.

——When a boss takes a certain amount of damage it can enter into Madness/Rampage mode, in this mode fighting power increases.

The shell of the Raven crumbles, and a burning red body made of flames is revealed.

As it spreads its wings fully, it seems like a flaming fortress.

.....*Tsk* damn, it's entered its madness mode huh?

One of the conditions to enter madness mode is to have magic power lowered to one-third of the total. Claude's valiant fight against it may have backfired in this situation.

Furthermore the Sunny Raven has.....

——-such overpowering magic.

Madness mode bosses spread out overpowering magic, magic with a certain range including teleportation magic that requires good concentration are basically sealed.

The range of this fallen king is remarkably vast.

It seems like it's no longer possible to run away.

Its red eyes burning with a desire for revenge, the Sunny Raven glares at me.

It flaps its wings towards me as if waving hello, and from there a huge number of fire balls are flung towards me.

Geh.....Red Ball! Moreover such an insane number!

[White Wa.....]

As I cast White Wall, I stop.

Shit, the magic power I have now is.....

Magic recovery medicine....!

I desperately try to search the bag, but by now the Red Ball is almost right on top of us.

No good I won't make it.....

[Zeph-kun!]

Claude cries out, embraces the back of my head, and I suddenly feel a soft sensation pressing against my lips.

Instantly my mind stops.

Right in front of me, with her eyes closed, is the face of a furiously blushing Claude.

Claude's tongue enters into my mouth, and at this point I finally understand what has just happened.

The next moment the Red Ball rained down on us, a pillar of fire and a cloud of smoke exploded into the air.

The smoke cleared up and little by little a big round shadow slowly crumbled.

That was the White Wall which at the very last instant blocked the rain of Red Balls.

From behind the crumbling wall the figures of myself and Claude appeared.

We separated our faces, and *Puwaaa* breathed.

There is a slightly bitter taste left in my mouth.

A while ago, Claude fed me the magic recovery medicine mouth to mouth.

Though I had Claude take the magic recovery medicines before, I never thought that it would come in handy like this.

[Sorry. You really helped me out.]

As one would expect, it's embarrassing.

I thank Claude with a red face.

[.....Um, this should be left a secret from Milly-san.....]

This last sentence was said very quietly.

We're so close that we can hear each other's heartbeat.

[Well Claude, a secret is all well and good, but can you keep what I'm about to do to yourself?]

[Eh.....what are you.....Yaaah!?!]

I slightly drop Claude making her let out a little scream.

When I regain my balance properly, I once again lift Claude back up.

[Since the Sunny Raven has entered its madness mode, its magic has a big range. In this situation escaping is really difficult. That's why, I'm just going to kill it]

[That's.....yeah, ok. But, why did you want it to be a secret...?]

I gave the confused Claude a roguish smile and answered.

[Because I'm not going to use very decent or respectable methods]

CHAPTER 48

SUNNY RAVEN FINAL

After the destruction caused by the flames, we stood there unharmed. For a moment the Sunny Raven looked at us curiously, but it immediately readied itself for battle and spread its wings.

Claude Leonhardt Level 31 [Red] Lvl 9/45 [Blue] Lvl 7/39 [Green] Lvl 0/40 [Sky] Lvl 0/47 [Soul] Lvl 0/51 Magic Power 46/596
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It seems like when she held the magic recovery medicine in her mouth a little while ago, her magic slightly recovered.

There's a perfect magic for this situation.

[Claude, activate Screen Point please]

[Understood]

A thin membrane covers Claude's body.

The Sunny Raven begins its assault and flaps its wings towards the ground, at that moment.

[...Lock]

I chant with my finger firmly pointed at the Sunny Raven's feet.

–Blue Wall!

The moment I chant my spell, a wall of ice appears at the raven's feet and traps one of its legs.

It's only a moment, but it is temporarily stopped and I won't let this opportunity go.

I then cast Blue Wall twice more, and the Sunny Raven's entire body is encased by ice.

Blue Wall is the hardest of all the 5 wall magics, it creates walls and narrow passages that hinder the enemy's movements.

However, that's the only publicly known use for it.

The complete sealing of the Sunny Raven's movements that I have just done, is a secret use for Blue Wall.

These walls made by magic will take time to destroy, no matter what magic resistance the boss has and even if it uses its full strength.

The wall type spells will appear at the exact coordinates you aim at when you invoke them.

It's necessary to aim for the monster's coordinates as accurately as possible to perfectly use Blue Wall. It's difficult to invoke it on a moving enemy, but you only need to catch them once then it's possible to completely seal their movements.

[Kurrururururu.....]

Crreeeeaaaakkkk the ice wall creaks and groans.

But it's useless, for a long time the magic society has taught [wall] as one of the first spells to magicians, it's not possible to break it in such a short amount of time.

[Amazing.....that giant body is completely frozen.....]

[Claude, stand there and don't move no matter what]

I move behind the confused Claude and stick close to her back, and at that moment the immobile and enraged Sunny Raven began to shoot magic randomly.

[Hi!?!]

She cried, and tried to run away. But I grabbed her shoulders from behind and held her in place. Flapping its wings and opening its beak, the raven rained many spells all throughout the range of its magic.

–Ah, the distant Roc Birds got scattered.

The Blue Wall encasement can, in the end, only seal its movements.

It is unable to stop the immobile monster's attacks, and within its range it will rain destruction.

In the blink of an eye, a crater has expanded through the area.

This is, of course, an annoying event for adventurers. When an especially powerful magic boss is reported to the magic society, secret methods will be used to deal with it.

As the surroundings are being destroyed, Claude is shaking and has broken out into a cold sweat, but is somehow still standing at attention.

I lean against her back and *gulp gulp* drink the magic recovery medicines I take out of Lydia's pack, and calculate the time.

–20 seconds left.

[Hieeeeeeeeeeee]

[Please endure, I'll be done as soon as possible]

I reach my hand under Claude's armpit and she lets out a little scream, but doesn't move her body.

I tell her not to move, and she properly stays still.

As expected, she's well disciplined.

The Sunny Raven's Madness Mode is Red attribute level 2. It's resistant to red and weak against blue.

However, the Blue system doesn't have any strong magic usable against boss monsters.

I'd have a chance of victory with synthesis magic, but Pyro Shot has its own weakness, and since I can't properly look at it or confirm the raven's status, Gravity Sphere probably won't hit.

What should I do now?.....as I thought that, Milly's face floated across my mind.

Milly's magic specialty huh? If it's that then I don't particularly need to aim.

I cast Magic Amp and then Blue Gale.

A doubly enhanced hurricane captures and engulfs the Sunny Raven's body.

The Sunny Raven struggles and flaps around seemingly in pain.

The Blue Gale didn't seem too different compared to Milly's even though I enhanced it.

It can't be helped, since our Blue Gale's levels are different.

-Only 7 seconds left.

While drinking the magic recovery medicine I continue to aim at the Sunny Raven's coordinates.

Pishipishi the first Blue Wall cracks, then immediately shatters...

But there are still two walls sealing that thing's movements, so it still can't regain its freedom yet.

This additional time delay is the reason I heaped the Blue Walls on top of each other.

The wall smoothly imprisoned the Sunny Raven for a second time, and I cast Scout Scope.

Sunny Raven

Level 77

Magic Power 59828/220580

It's being cut down little by little.

If it's like this can I just defeat it?

I still have magic recovery medicine too.

I count the Blue Wall's activation time and cast a double Blue Gale.

Even while suffering in the hurricane, the Sunny Raven scatters magic everywhere.

A number of the spells hit Claude, but she nullifies them and continues to stand there without moving.

Because I'm pressed against her back, I can tell how scared she is, her heart is beating violently in fear.

Her hands and feet are shaking and shivering.

No matter how well she can nullify magic, it's still undoubtedly scary.

But there's no choice but to withstand it.

Do your best Claude, if it's you then I believe you can do it.

Once more I estimate the right time and cast Blue Wall twice again.

It'd be a waste of magic so I won't use Scout Scope anymore.

For the fourth time.....Double Blue Gale!

The hurricane tears into the Sunny Raven, and its body made of flames dispersed into the air.

At the same time, I felt that I had leveled up.

I finished it.

[That's amazing! Zeph-kun! You really beat it!]

[Though the surroundings are in a terrible state]

Claude looked over her shoulder with a smiling face and let out a gasp.

Claude looked around the area and saw that wherever the magic of the enraged Sunny Raven hit, there was a crater with smoke rising out of it.

What a horrible state this place is in.

Ah well, a dungeon spot with highly concentrated magic will, to some degree, repair such damage within a few days.

It's to the point where the defeated monsters can be revived by magic. There's no reason for it not to be enough to restore some land.

Even so, Claude seems overcome with emotion. Her eyes seem to have gotten misty.

Well it's not like I don't understand how she feels, I thought while looking at her face from the side. Then she turned her face towards me and embraced me tightly.

[I.....I thought that.....if I could protect everyone then it'd be fine for me to die here.....but you protected everyone and even beat the boss.....Zeph-kun I'm so glad to be with you..!]

With a tearful voice Claude lets out her feelings, and when I pet her head a little, she hugs me even tighter.

This is all well and good, but the plate armor is hurting me.

Well, Claude's happy, so why not stay like this for a while?

CHAPTER 49

KILL STEAL

[Zeph-kun! Please look at that!]

Claude was pointing at where the Sunny Raven had just disappeared, it seems it left an item there.

It's a sword.

The item the Sunny Raven dropped is the treasure sword Freybrand.

It is loaded with flame magic and is capable of casting Red Ball without verbal chanting.

It relies on one's own magic, the quality of that magic, and several other factors which cause the power to vary greatly. The [Anyone can use it] Red Ball isn't that powerful because of it.

Though I say that, it is an interesting weapon nonetheless. Nobles and rich people usually want this sword to show off, in other words it's a luxury item.

I wonder if it's relatively rare at this time? In Beruta town I saw it being sold once at a stall.

At that time, I think the price was.... 3,000,000 rupi, and even at that price it sold immediately.

Why a monster turns into things like weapons, armor, etc. is unknown. But one sort of explanation is that, the magic from the surroundings in the dungeon is concentrated inside of monsters, while in combat the monsters begin to form the items according to appearance and type.

I immediately ran over to Freybrand and went to take it in my hand.

—-but my hand was deflected and I felt a light pain.

Then from the side another hand reaches out and grabs the treasure sword Freybrand.

It seems like they teleported over here, and before I could do anything, the hand had hidden the sword away inside a black coat.

[That.....why.....]

In contrast to Claude's cry of dismay, I clicked my tongue. As I thought.

The Sunny Raven was hurt before. In all likelihood, before it fought us, it probably had already been in a battle.

While it was in battle it was probably shot while we were unable to see.

The monster is made up of the dungeon's magical energy. The items dropped from the monsters are also made up and surrounded by the same magic and energy.

This magic will reject anyone except the one who fought the monster. Until this magic disappears the only ones who can pick up the item is the main fighter and their partner.

The definition of [Main Fighter] and partner are the ones who did the most damage to the monster.

If more than one party hurt the same monster, the one who did the most damage is given priority.

Therefore, those with ill intentions purposefully attacking from the side to steal the item, this is called a [Kill Steal] , the magic association decided that this action is prohibited.

[.....! Intentionally stealing the kill from the side is banned!]

[That is pretty much only for normal monsters only. Claude, kill stealing or attacking from the side to take down a dangerous and powerful boss is a valid act.]

[That's the case. Sorry.]

Immediately above where I was squatting I hear a familiar low husky voice.

—this voice, can it be!?

Surprised, I raise my head and it's just as I remember. Short black hair and a black coat. Underneath it is a well-proportioned and slim body.

Navel exposed, with a short shirt slightly open at the chest and well-toned abs.

A magic enhancing circle was drawn upside-down on black gloves. On her neck is a silver necklace with magic enhancements. Cold almond shaped eyes and a straight nose.

I remember the appearance of this woman as her coat flaps as I look at her.

[Good work]

(Master!)

I froze in surprise and somehow managed to keep myself from crying out.

This woman, once upon a time, took me in as a disciple even though it was an unreasonable request, Seruberie Shugeru.

I never interacted much with other people but, within only half a year of being with her I acknowledged her as the strongest mage I'd seen. Her impression is sharper than what I'm used to, but on the whole her atmosphere is just the same.

Her thin, wolf-like body and her sharp predatory gaze are the same as always.

My deeply emotional gaze might have seemed strange to my motionless master.

Giving me a dubious look, she wordlessly teleported away.

[What the heck was that!]

Not paying attention to the pouting and angry Claude, I stare in a daze in the direction my master has just disappeared.

She looks at my face and sees that I'm not really paying attention, and her cheeks puff up even further in displeasure.

A little bit later we return to Milly and Lydia's side. Milly is on the verge of tears and is still continuing to cast healing on Lydia.

[We have just returned Milly-san]

When Milly hears Claude's call, she lifts her face, and the tears gathered in her eyes start to flow down her face.

[Zeph, Claude you're okay!]

Leaving Lydia, she leaps towards me and Claude.

H.....hugging my neck with all your strength is painful.

[You two.....why are you both always so beat up.....]

Now that you mention it whenever Claude and I fight together we seem to always end up in tatters.....

Maybe we don't have very good compatibility.

As I was spacing out and thinking, Lydia abruptly sat up.

[.....huh? what's going on guys? I mean what happened to me too?]

Since she hit her head it seems like her consciousness is confused.

Lydia looks at us with a sleepy blank expression on her face, and we all start laughing.

Since after all that's happened we're tired, we are ready to go back to town.

We all go to the edge of a cliff and teleport directly to the foot of the mountain. Then we waited for the carriage to come and returned to the town by evening. The loot that was in the carriage, the roc bird claw etc., was sold for 20,000 rupi, and while Milly was pleased with the money, Claude, who had seen my master take Freybrand, had a complicated expression.

By the way, since last time we used money to buy Milly and Claude equipment, this time the money is to buy equipment for me. It's fine to use it freely but, well it's good to take my time to choose.

We split with Lydia and the three of us were on the way back to the inn. Milly kept asking about the boss fight over and over, but we said that we had run away from it.

Claude and I had gotten our stories straight and our acting was pretty good so we weren't found out. Claude looked at me, her gaze was threatening and a little scary demanding a proper explanation later.

When we got back to the inn, Milly went by herself to take a bath and Claude visited my room.

[What's the meaning of this! Why is this a secret from Milly-san? And why are you siding with that person!?!]

When she entered the room, Claude drew closer to me.

She was staring at me and looked like she was going to grab me at any moment.

[....Well calm down Claude. It's not that I'm on mas.....her side. Boss hunting just has those kinds of rules. And if we were to tell Milly she'd just blow up and there'd be trouble]

[That's.....certainly you could say that I guess....]

I drive away the still dissatisfied Claude and recall what happened this noon.

The moment before master teleported, I barely managed to cast Scout Scope.

Seruberie Shuguru

Level 91

[Red] Lvl 72/78

[Blue] Lvl 78/85

[Green] Lvl 45/70

[Sky] Lvl 79/94

[Soul] Lvl 18/65

Magic Power 1126/5715

That person has a really high magic level.

Right now my master should be around 20 years old or so.....

At that stage it is extremely hard to raise your level.

In those days Scout Scope wasn't around so they wouldn't really know, but reaching such a level took only 20 years.

Also there is the risk of [Death] that comes with long periods of hunting, there aren't many that would hunt for such a long time, also.....in those days compared to now the leveling up might reach a brake at high levels and you may only be able to level up once per year or something like that.

I don't even know what to say about this kind of speed.....

However, what's truly surprising isn't just this.

Before she took off, I couldn't see very well but, there were at least 10....special magic's that I could see.

It was the inherent magic that was specialized to my Master that I've seen her use in the past. There was an enchantment spell on her equipment, which increased the effectiveness of said equipment however, that obvious enchantment was to hide her more special magic's which she had stored away in case of emergencies.

As per usual, she is still such a careful person.

CHAPTER 50

THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

[.....no matter how much you ask if it's not possible it's not possible. Sorry but I'm busy. Try someone else.]

Shaaaa the rain was falling, my head bowed, a woman looked at me emotionlessly.

Her black coat flapping in the wind, not letting a single drop of rain through.

In those days I didn't know much about magic but, while other mages were using umbrellas and wearing raincoats, the woman in front of me was using magic to block the rain.

I thought that other mages might not be able to do this and it needed amazing magic usage.

I continue to look at her in envy and listlessly comb my hair up and let out a weary sigh.

[.....why not me?]

[That's.....]

As master is about to answer I—wake up.

A dream huh?

A dream of the past when I met master.

I've heard of cases where you wake up at midnight from a dream...there are those kinds of things.

My mouth is parched.

In my room is a pitcher full of water, I pour it into a teacup, and drink it all in one gulp.

It's still dark outside.

I think it's probably still the middle of the night.

By the way, I wasn't woken up by the dream, but instead woke up naturally.

Inside of Time Square I can endow a sleeping state by casting Sleep Code and Healing at the same time, in an instant I can enter a state of deep sleep and it can cut my necessary sleep time in about half.

When I'm with Milly and the others, I can't act as I please and I can't find any time to train magic on my own, but I can utilize this time between midnight and dawn to train as much as I want.

It's become a habit now to cast Scout Scope when I get up.

Zeph Einstein Level 37 [Red] Lvl 30/62 [Blue] Lvl 27/87 [Green] Lvl 28/99 [Sky] Lvl 29/89 [Soul] Lvl 20/97 Magic Power 1450/1465

Oh yeah, on the Sunray Mountains I used Black Sphere and Green Sphere quite a bit, I wonder how many levels I got.

I check these two levels and then I notice something.

White Sphere Lvl 1

Summon Servant

Below White Sphere, there is something written in gray letters, called Summon Servant.

All the other magic is written in white letters.

It seems like Scout Scope's level has increased.

It seems like it's reached the point where I can acquire new magic.

[However, Summon Servant huh, I haven't heard of this magic. It seems like a type of summoning magic though....]

There are methods to learn magic through scrolls, and there is a method to learn magic through increasing your level. (Actually learning through levels is the original method.)

For example: if you raise the level of Red Ball enough, then you will eventually be able to use Red Shot.

For Soul magic, anything beyond mid-class spells require a high-class medium (costing 1000 rupi each) to use, for this reason it is quite restrictive.

For that reason, Soul magic is limited to extremely rich people or whimsical flights of fancy.

These kinds of people who spend such Grand amounts of money on magic don't really have any reason to get involved with the magic association, therefore the Grand Soul Magics are mostly unknown to most.

[I thought that you could use the first Grand magics once you level up Sphere and Crash.]

The mid-class long range magic Sphere and the short range Crash, if I remember correctly, once you train these two, it'll become possible to use Grand Magic.

[I wanna try it out.....but, it costs too much money]

The first Grand Magic I remember learning was the...Red Grand Magic, by using Crash and Sphere as my main, I remember it took me about two months.

It'd be 500 times a day for 60 days, so that's about 30,000 times and that'd come out to about....30,000,000 rupi?

Moreover this is just an assumption, it's possible for a Grand Magic to require up to 3 high quality mediums.

[.....so that's why no one uses it...]

Because I'm a person that finds most things bothersome, carrying around jangling clanking high quality mediums for spells was something I've not done.

However, Soul is the magic I have the second greatest talent in.

And looking at it, I'm curious about this magic that I haven't heard of before.

[First of all I've got to earn money.]

I don't feel that it's appropriate to dip into the guild's funds, I've got to figure out a way to earn money from hunting at night.

Though I say that, I can't go too far away.

I have to go money hunting within Beruta.....

[.....oh yeah there's that place]

-Cave by the Seaside-

It's the dungeon where I first went hunting with Lydia.

It's not the season for mass gathering, but the Nippers drop the Sea God's Tears and they're worth some money.

Plus, this late at night there aren't really any people.

This time I enter from the entrance.

The inside is pretty spacious and half of it is covered by the tide.

There seems to be some deep areas so I need to proceed with caution.

As expected, since it's so late there's no one here, so I can expect to do some pleasant hunting.

I cast Black Boots, wind covers my feet, and my body feels lighter.

I teleport intermittently, quickly searching and in the distance I see a shadow move.

A light blue, soft and flabby, jelly shape is there.

And from it a feeler extends out searching around it for prey.

[Seaside Gel huh]

A jellyfish that lives in the sea with dungeon magic, it gains the ability to roam on land.

Its body is slow but the feelers and unexpectedly fast and powerful so being cautious is a good idea.

When I notice it approaching me slowly, I cast Black Boots on it, the Seaside Gel is covered in wind, and it looks like someone put it on fast forward as it comes after me. The increased speed of it squirming towards me was kind of disgusting.

Be that as it may, it's speed was still only about half of mine, so I had it follow me around while I hunt.

As I led the Seaside Gel around, I saw a Nipper and shot a Red Ball at it.

When it got hit by the flames, it started chasing me but it was slow, I cast Black Boots, and the Nipper's speed increased.

I repeat this several times and eventually I have a few monsters following at a sped up pace, however the concentration of monsters is too thin.

For training and hunting this is lacking in efficiency.

[Black Crash!]

The monster group was caught up in a dark tornado and was torn apart, then I kept walking.

Shall I go in deeper?

It's late at night but the inside of the cave is lit up.

The moss on the walls seems to be able to glow.

If you think about it, this cave should be dark even at noon, but it seems like that won't be a problem.

While I'm walking, if I find a Nipper I cast Black Crash and tear it apart.

[This is certainly 1000 rupi. Now I only need to repeat this 30,000 times....]

Once before Lydia got an order for tens of High quality mediums, but it was a miscalculation.

She almost fainted.

It's not the Nipper's hunting season so there aren't that many around.

However, my aim isn't the Nippers.

I came here when it wasn't that time because there wouldn't be any people, and the monsters would be left alone.

[....there it is.]

In the corner of the cave.

A huge red body half hidden by rocks, seemingly asleep, and unmoving.

8 large legs twitching at times, and large claws moving up and down with its breath.

The seaside cave's mid-boss, King Nipper.

[I'll be your opponent for the night.]

CHAPTER 51

ACQUISITION

I confirmed the existence of the King Nipper sleeping by the side of a rock, and I begin to formulate the combat plan.

There are no enemies in the surrounding area, moreover the area is quite spacious for battle, If my speed is enhanced and I attack it whilst kiting it backwards, it should be sufficient to kill it.

A little distance is taken, I faced towards the King Nipper and began chanting green sphere.

A green magic ball floats in the air as it flutters forwards.....following that I casted another green sphere.

The speed of the green sphere is slow, and it is difficult to hit mobile targets.

However, the opposite is also true, for a target that isn't very agile, it is possible to cast multiple green spheres and hit the target.

The moment the first green sphere hit, I chanted time square, and I simultaneously casted both black sphere and green sphere.

[Gravity Sphere!!]

a black magic ball is generated and the torso of the King Nipper was being shaved off.

For something as huge as a King Nipper, it wasn't really necessary to aim a body part with so much precision, but perhaps it was because I was continuously using this spell in the Sunray Mountain Range, but I have become able to pretty accurately target the location I aim at.

It just means that I got used to the spell I suppose.

The next green sphere also lands on its target.

When the second green sphere hit, the King Nipper was pressed against the rock wall, and seemingly as if it was in pain, it clattered and squirmed to escape the ball.

I wanted to continue.....to attack however, I didn't have limitless magic so I needed to confirm it's health.

As the green sphere slowly fades away I immediately casted scout scope.

King Nipper

Level 58

Magical Value 48825/65824

I used almost all of my magical energy to cast these spells, and it took around 17000 health.

The green sphere was now completely broken, and as the King Nipper approaches me, I perform my meditation.

Whilst circulating my magical energy throughout my body, I imagine my body being very still.

The King Nipper raises it's scissor hands in the air, and throws it straight towards me, I quickly jump backwards and evade the blow.

I keep meditating whilst continuing to create a bigger distance between the King Nipper.

.....About 20 percent has been recovered.

It's because half of my focus is on evading the hits.

The rate of recovery is slower than usual.

Over and over again, the King Nipper strikes at me with it's huge scissor hands and even though it was possible to avoid, the magnitude of damage still frightened me.

I have safe protection on me so it wasn't like I was going to die in one hit, however whenever I barely avoid the strike, I feel a chill up my spine, and it disturbs my concentration.

Using Gravity Sphere many times, to some degree I have been able to grasp the feeling when it's about to "hit" the target, and I suppose I will only get better as I keep using it.

If I used some sort of elemental wall, and stopped it's movements, it would be really easy to take it down, however I was resolved to improve my close quarters combat so I discarded the idea.

This is because, the King Nipper was big and slow.

For a sparring partner, this fellow was the perfect practice.

.....30 Percent Recovery.

I kept avoiding the attacks, and whilst planning for my next set of actions, I continued to meditate.

If this was a quick moving monster, I wouldn't be able to replicate this behaviour.

At least, with my current strength that is.

Dogun!!

A sound of impact resounds as the King Nipper misses his strike again, suddenly the King Nipper stops it's movements.

It would seem that after striking the wall, it's thick scissor hands was stuck and wouldn't come out.

Chance!

I approached it, holding my hand over it's thick shell and recited Green Sphere.

Before the impact, the King Nipper began to blow bubbles out of its mouth.

The shell carapace cracks a little.

It's eyes looked towards me, it seemed to be filled with anger as it glared viciously.

However, I was unconcerned.

[Green Crash!!]

When I fired off my blast of magic towards it, its body began to sink even deeper into the rock wall.

If he's stuck in the wall like this, can't I just take advantage and keep shooting him?

Even his torso is starting to sink into the wall and the ceiling crumbles a little.

[Green Crash!]

As it was struggling to get out, I didn't let it and fired another attack.

However, with that last blow, the wall completely crumbles and the King Nipper retrieved it's freedom.

The moment it breaks free, it lashes out at me in anger with it's huge scissor hands and it manages to catch the edge of my clothing, just like that, my body was carried by the force of the swing.

[Shit.....!?!]

Just as I was thinking this, it was too late, the ballistic impact threw me against the rock wall.

Blood flowed backwards from my internal organs, and a little leaks out from my mouth.

My clothes ripped half way and it was lucky that the clothes were no longer caught in its grasp.

If I was crushed continuously by its scissor hands, even if I had safe protection on me, I would have not been able to get away without severe injuries.

I walked forwards with an unsteady gait, as I meditated.

Previously I have already hit it with green crash three times, it is likely that it still has more than half of its hp.

Even if I was in my best condition it would take around 3 minutes to completely recover my magic.

On top of this, with my injured state, and being exposed to the attacks of the King Nipper, I have to endure whilst meditating.

The situation is quite bad, and it is in times like this that a true magician would be able to go into deep meditation.

My consciousness was purely focused on two things: meditating and avoid attacks.

Optimization of ideas and putting it into practice.

Predict the King Nippers trajectory of attack from its starting point to the finish, and focus on meditating to the limits before evading the attack.

Zudon! The downward swing of its large pincers could be predicted! The angle and position it would land in.

I stared into the ground where its pincers were now buried with no feelings whatsoever, with a lot of force, the King Nipper dug up a rock from the ground and flung it towards me.

I could also predict this set of movements.

I hid myself behind boulder as the rock came flying over, and as the remnants of flying debris settled down, I quickly escaped from this small space into a wider place running with short steps.

Perhaps this would work better if I avoid like Lydia, who avoids the blow with minimal movements, however, that kind of movement is impossible for me.

Forecasting the orbit from the starting point of the attack, I could roughly deal with it.

Erasing any distracting thoughts, and to a certain extent predicting its attack patterns and movements, the best I can do is optimize my unrefined movements by repeating it many times.

If there is some distance between us the King Nipper's movements are quite dull and monotonous.

After a while it was simple to deal with.

Whilst slowly meditating, I kept on evading the attack of the King Nipper.

My magic was recovering fairly well, it should be about done.

[Gravity Sphere!!]

The carapace of the King Nipper began to billow and creak as a fissure opened up.

When I was fighting it previously, I remember that I casted Pyro Crash to deal approximately 7000 damage to it.

Gravity Sphere was similar but a little more powerful.

Because my level has increased since then so I approximate it to be around 10,000 per blast.

In other words, I would need to cast it around 3 or 4 more times.....

I regained my breath at once and began meditating again.

—After applying the third round of Gravity Sphere to it, the King Nipper was swallowed by the black magical sphere and was exterminated.

It was an intense fight.....

Both the ground and the surface of the rock wall in the surroundings were filled with holes as dust floated around.

The last time I killed the boss it did not drop anything special, but the King Nipper has a high chance of dropping the Poseidon Tears.

The other thing it could drop quite frequently was an even bigger Poseidon Tear and it's price would be ten times the amount of a normal tear.

Therefore, it was unsurprising that the King Nipper was a monster that was often targeted by Adventurers.

After the King Nipper disappeared, I doubted my eyes momentarily as to what I saw. What lie there was a square light brown object that was shining. On the square object, a picture of the King Nipper was drawn on it.

[A King Nipper Card....You've got to be kidding me....?!]

CHAPTER 52

SERUBERIE

King Nipper Card.

Its use is to cut all incoming damage by 30 percent, this will apply to even physical damage. If the card is enchanted into an armor, no matter who the magician is, they will want this particular card. For a mage who lacks protection and is not skilled in the arts of physical combat, the card is highly compatible with them.

Moreover, because the armor blocks all incoming damage by a flat 30 percent, even if the boss is highly skilled in magic, it will still be useful. Because my luck is not that great, I have never picked up a card myself until now.

In the past, I hunted a large amount of zombies that was rotting away in the church, but after killing a large number of them, a card did not drop.

(Well, perhaps it was because I indiscriminately massacred them too much...so that I did not notice even if it were to drop....Well the effects of a zombie card are pretty much trash, so it's not like it matters anyways)

I quickly rushed over and picked up the King Nipper card.

A boss card is extremely expensive and can be sold for a price that lets seven generations of a family live without working any longer, furthermore, the money can be used to purchase the most expensive high quality equipment.

I'm guessing for a mid-boss card like the King Nipper, it will be at least a tenth of the price of a boss card. When I think about such a thing, my heartbeat reflexively quickens and my palms get sweaty. The hand holding the card is trembling. I felt like I would accidentally drop the card as I put it in my pouch, and just as I was about to do so, I felt a presence behind me, so I turned around.

[We meet again]

It was a nostalgic voice that I was used to hearing.

Before I knew it, my Master approached me whilst holding on to her coat. Inadvertently, I quickly hid my hand which was holding on to the card.

[You don't have to worry, it's not like I will do something as despicable as stealing. If I'm found out by the Magician Society to be a criminal who steals, even I will be in a heap of trouble]

[No, I wasn't implying such a thing....]

I said this whilst smiling bitterly. Contrary to my own expectation, I was quite the cheap person. I pulled the concealed card back out of my pocket as if appealing that my intentions were pure.

Naturally, stealing another adventurer's loot, was strictly prohibited. When a dungeon is officially recognized and being managed by the government, any illegal acts are all monitored by the Magician Society, if a fight breaks out and people start attacking each other, this will be monitored.

As a result if the people are found to be guilty, the elite group from the Magician society will be sent out, and the criminal will be restrained and apprehended. By the way, in the slum areas of the downtown, these kinds of trouble crops up way too often, so in that area, there isn't much measures being taken. Adding on to this fact, there are a variety of other complicated rules and regulations regarding politics and rights, but I'm not too acquainted with those things.

In terms of teaching me various things, like the best way to train against a particular monster, or how to hunt the small fries or the stronger monsters these kinds of things were all taught to me by my master, however, I've never seen her hurt or torture a person or threaten them.

[By the way, I have quite a rude request suddenly, I really want the King Nipper card and I've been hunting it for a long period of time. Do you think that you could sell it over to me? If it's about the money I will pay however much you would like]

Saying this, she took out a bag filled with a huge amount of money.

[This is everything I own]

As usual she's completely crazy.....As I thought such things, I inadvertently laughed.

[Did I say something weird?]

[.....Well, a woman who can suddenly fling her whole wealth away isn't necessarily the most normal thing]

When my Master wants something, she will throw everything away in order to obtain it.

That concentration and tenacity is something worthy of deep admiration, amongst the Magician users, her nickname is called the "Starving Wolf". In the past, I've occasionally used this habit of hers to my advantage.

When I move the card to the left, she follows my hand chasing it down with her eyes. When I moved it to the right, her gaze kept following my hand.....As usual, Master, you haven't changed one bit.

In the old times, I travelled together with my master, and there was this cake called the Wagashi, which was a sweet tasting cake (from a foreign country with a rich texture, it was quite popular. However, obtaining the cake was an arduous task) Just like in my memory, she was persistently chasing after it.

She's willing to give me any price....? Hmm, the cost to increase the level of my abilities will take high level magical mediums, which will be approximately 30,000,000 Rupiah.

Well to start with, I'll ask her for this much.

[If you give me 30,000,000 Rupiah, I will be happy to sell it]

[.....I'm sorry but, I am two million short]

Even so it's a sum of 28 million Rupiah...

If it's just two million, even I can obtain it if I work, let alone for my Master, she should be able to obtain it very quickly.....

[I will be able to obtain it tomorrow. I really need this item, could you please wait for me a little longer?]

[That's not possible. If you don't pay up right now, I won't sell it]

[.....I'm begging you. If it's something I can do, let me know and I will do it for you]

Taking off her coat and letting it drop to the ground, I could see a large amount of Magical items inside her pockets.

[If you want to take away all these magical items in my possession, I also won't mind it. If you sell these items, they should amount to at least 5 million Rupiahs]

She wants it that badly? However after taking off her coat, her upper body was really exposed, her body right now was quite seamy.....

When I stare at her, her expression was really desperate. Umu, did I tease her too much? For some reason I felt kind of sorry for her. There must be a really good reason, why she really needed the card.

[.....Well, it's not like I really need the money....Do you think I could speak to you about another matter?]

Saying this, I placed my hand towards my Master. Perhaps she was slightly perplexed at the sudden motion, but she regained her composure, and lightly shook my hand.

[I'm Zeph. Zeph Einstein]

[.....Seruberie Shigeru]

Not looking at the card, this time around she was looking at me when she answered.

It would seem that she has taken a slight interest in me.

—-Entrance to the Beach Dungeon Cave

When I left the cave, a fresh sea breeze fills up my lungs.

I've consistently kept up the healing, so I should be a lot better now.

[Zeph.....Do you mind if I call you by that?]

[Of course it's fine, I hope it's alright if I call you by Seruberie]

When I was travelling together with Master, I used to call her by Master, but right now, it is probably more appropriate for me to call her by Seruberie.

Seruberie.

Seruberie.

Seruberie..... OK.

For adventurers, things like age do not really matter, the standard is to call each other by their first names regardless of a hierarchical relationship. This is so that both parties can admit an equal existence.....that's what it's supposed to be, but considering how big our age gap is.... it may be a little awkward.

[So, getting back to the point, what exactly do you want me to do?]

She was sitting next to me, and whilst asking this question she casually brushed her hair upwards. Umu, to begin with, I just wanted to have a conversation with her, so I didn't really have something I really wanted her to do.

To put it simply, I was quite curious about Seruberie's inherent skills, even at the time when she was my Master, I never got the chance to ask her personally, moreover, she probably wouldn't have told me anyway.

When Seruberie saw that I was in deep thought, she became a little nervous somehow.

[What's the matter, did you have something you needed to do?]

[.....Well, I suppose you could say that. I'd be thankful if your request could be done as soon as possible]

Since a long time ago, my Master did not really get along well with others. Moreover, at this current time, she was probably busy with Boss hunting.

When she was travelling together with me, she told me that she already retired from boss hunting, however, when she was younger, she also said that there was countless sleepless nights where she continued to relentlessly hunt bosses in a rotation.

When you mention it, I've never seen how she hunted bosses.....When I asked her to show me how it was done, she had already retired and I didn't get to see her skills in boss hunting.

If it's at this point in time, perhaps, she would show me.

[When you said you had other business to do, can I assume that it is boss hunting? I would like you to bring me along, and let me see how it's done, what do you think about this?]

Whilst looking at her, I suggested this to Seruberie.

Perhaps she was not accustomed to me looking at her so intently? I get the feeling that she's slightly averting her eyes from me in embarrassment.

And, she thought about my suggestion for a few seconds and opened her mouth to talk.

[.....You can do what you like. However, I'm not going to baby sit you either]

[I need the experience to get used to the carnage, you see]

When I asked her if I could come, she responded with a pretty good answer.

CHAPTER 53

ENCHANTMENT SPELL

—In a plain field covered in perpetual darkness, Both Seruberie and I used teleport to cover a lot of ground. Our destination was a church which had fallen to ruins. Apparently, Seruberie's target this time around is the boss monster King of Death.

Actually before we moved into the town of Beruta, I went to find the King of Death with Milly multiple times in order to hunt it, however no matter how many times we searched, we couldn't find it, so I assumed that someone else had been hunting it and gave up, to think that it was Seruberie who was the culprit behind this.....

Unexpectedly the world is quite a small place. It took us around 30 minutes of continuous travelling before we reached the decayed church. Because I barely had any time to rest along the way here, it was quite difficult for me to keep up. Seruberie seemed completely fine after all that travelling, but I was completely exhausted. Because the amount of magic she has is way more than me, I suppose it's natural.

[It should be around here somewhere....]

Monsters have a high chance of spawning close to the place they got killed. They leave a residue of magic when they die and is likely to re spawn around the same place. On a side note, the color of soil around Seruberie's feet is a little bit different. She must have used some kind of magic to burn the ground, and changed the color, perhaps?

.....This is quite good, if I can figure out how she does it, travelling and tracking the boss will become more efficient. Whilst I was thinking this, Seruberie took out a notebook and a pocket watch out of her coat in order to check the time.

[It should revive in around 10 more minutes]

The King of the Dead absorbs the magic of a dungeon, and the time required to revive is approximately seven days. It is likely that the moment she kills the boss, she would write the exact time in her notebook. Although there may be a little disparity between the intervals of time in which the boss monster revives, there should be some kind of pattern that she managed to grasp.

Umu, I am quite curious...

[Do you mind it if I join in to attack as well?]

[Attacking the boss from the side, is not prohibited]

[.....I suppose that is the case]

I've already stocked up on some high grade mediums to use in case of an emergency, which I bought from Lydia a while back. For the time being, it should be alright if I aim at the boss from a long distance away using White Sphere. When I applied Safe protection on myself and looked towards Seruberie, she was already starting to chant some spells.

[Black Spiraling Serpent, Clad me in thy magical energy and allow me to crush my enemies throat]

As she chanted her spell, Seruberie's hand started to glow with magical power as the image of a snakelike being entwined around her arm in a spiral.

[it's a High Enchantment Spell]

The magic she used seemed to be one of her inherent abilities, an enchantment spell. This kind of spell increases the abilities of the user for a fixed period of time. Her Enchantment Spell was a high rank spell, not only was the incantation time shorter than normal, the length of the effect should be longer and also the range would increase. She seems to be quite proficient in applying this type of support spell to her body.

By the way my spell Time Square is also able to amplify the effects of an enchantment spell by combining different spells together. Seruberie was concentrating whilst still taking account of her surroundings, as she pulled out a black obsidian rod and held it with her right hand. Her hand started to glow with white colored light. She was beginning to apply Magic Up to herself.

When I looked at Seruberie preparing for battle, I could tell how polished she was at executing her task. When I travelled with her in the past I was just a young boy, so I didn't really understand, but now that I knew, I didn't expect her to be this good at applying enchantment spells.

Even when I was on the verge of death, I was not able to perform an enchantment spell to this level of proficiency. The quality of one's magic is usually developed through battle experience, where the flow of magic can be refined and in time, the user will become more fluent.

In order to achieve such a state, it would normally take many years to accomplish, however, although Seruberie was around 20 years of age, she was already reaching the level of a master in this particular area of magic.

This is most likely due to the other inherent skills in her possession, which has boosted her growth. Although I am not sure of the minute details of her enchantment quite yet, by seeing her continuously cast spells, I have gradually gained a bit of experience. By nature, the speed of her incantations are unbelievably fast, so it is very difficult to grasp.

Umu, I really want her to teach me.....But I don't think that she will create a scroll for me, besides if I ask her about this carelessly, she may avoid me and refuse to meet with me in the future. I will endure it for now.....

Whilst thinking such things, I casted Scout Scope to observe Seruberie's current situation. Even the speed of recovering her magic through meditation is really fast.....When I continued to stare at her, Seruberie turns towards me and raises her right hand over my head.

Immediately after I sensed her thirst for blood and quickly teleported away. At the same time, Seruberie already finished chanting her spell as she launched it.

[Highness Black Zero]

A black wind blade was launched from her right hand and flew straight into the location I was just at. The target was the King of Death which just revived behind me.

The spell Black Zero pierced through the body of the King of Death, however, the effect's only seemed to make the movements of the monster a little duller, without giving much care to the damage it received, the boss monster headed towards Seruberie. The King of death fought against the black torrent of wind which was violently rushing towards it, as it slowly but surely took steps forward.

However, Seruberie had already disappeared from that location. The King of Death stiffened up as if it was surprised, however I was even more surprised when I spotted just how far Seruberie had appeared.

Seruberie was already sliding through the ground as she unleashed her vigorous wind spell Black Zero. When you looked closely enough, you could tell that the shoes she wore had wheels on them, grinding through the ground, a cloud of dust appears as she glides through.

Using a spell of the Zero caliber, would surely drain almost all of her magical energy.

The moment it is used, it is not possible to deal with the enemy using magic for a period of time afterwards, however using this method of escape, she was able to buy some time.

The King of Death who had now been released from the torrent of wind was pursuing her, although, it was clear to see that Seruberie's speed was much faster.....But travelling in that direction is bad!

[Seruberie! Be careful over there! There is a rock!]

The moment I shouted out the words, Seruberie already disappeared and she was dancing in midair. She jumped over the huge rock, after rotating around, she sunk her body deeply as if to absorb some of the impact from the landing as she continued to glide across the ground without stopping. What an absurd amount of balance...

But since she landed, the velocity of her speed has fallen considerably. The King of Death also jumps over the big rock, and with that momentum, it swung its staff towards her, luckily Seruberie manages to avoid the strike by a hairs breadth. Seruberie kicks off the ground in order to gain more propelling force, as the King of Death pulls his staff readying another attack.

[White Sphere!]

A big white ball of magic hits the King of Death, and attempts to purify its body. Although it's a particular branch of magic that I rarely used, its range is quite huge so it was quite easy to land.....using this spell requires me to use up a medium.

By the way, I was using Time Square to cast two White Sphere's at the same time, so the medium consumption will also double. With this 2000 Rupiah just went down the drain, I think I'm starting to feel a little dizzy.

The King of Death who was enveloped in the white light seemed to begin crumbling as it began to scowl at me. Seruberie had just used her spell Black Zero so she couldn't really cast anymore magic for the time being. This feels just like the old times, should I try to buy her some time?

The King of Death started to come towards me, I immediately chanted teleport and went in the opposite direction of Seruberie.

I made the King of Death run around in circles as I flitted about the place using teleport, and on the fifth time I teleported....

Another Black Wind Blade was launched as it pierced through the King of Death, The wind even came towards my direction. It was likely that she drank some recovery medicine, considering that she was already able to re cast Black Zero.

The King of Death crumbled down in a pitter-patter and its form transformed into the figure of a God of Death as it held a sickle in its hands....It went into berserk mode.

Just when I thought this was about to happen, the King of Death continued to collapse and completely disappeared from existence. Berserk mode would activate after the boss's Health reaches 1/3 of its health pool, however if the damage taken completely obliterates its Health in one attack then it will stop its transformation and just disappear completely.

Even considering the fact that I landed my White Sphere on the Boss, to say that it only took her two spells to completely kill off the Boss monster.....What an absurdly high magical power?! Seruberie is really scary!

CHAPTER 54

SPENDING

[Mu, it didn't drop?]

Seruberie mutters whilst going to the place where the King of Death disappeared. Apparently, there was no items that dropped. However, it did not seem like she was particularly disappointed, she then proceeded to mark the ground with a burning spell. It's likely that she marked the ground to use it as a spotting tool for the next time she hunted. After finishing her marking which turned the ground into a burnt black color, she headed towards me.

[Well, this is how it usually goes. Will this be good enough? Zeph?]

[Thank you. It's been a really good reference to learn from, Seruberie]

"You don't need to be so polite" is what Seruberie responded with, as I took out the King Nipper Card.

[Thanks, it's been a really good trade. If there is another opportunity later, please remember me]

[Of course. Same here]

I exchanged the King Nipper card with the pouch of money she held. Although I was trying to think of something clever to say, there was nothing that came out of my mouth. Seruberie looked towards me like she wanted to say something as well.....but that is probably just my one sided feeling, right? I want to say something but, nothing comes to mind.

Shit, this is so awkward.

[Alright then...]

[Ah? Ahh.....]

She curtly exchanges parting words, and she immediately activated teleport straight afterwards. In the end I couldn't find any words to say.

Good grief, I'm such a poor talker that it's embarrassing.

By the time I came back into Beruta Town, the sun was already beginning to rise, when I return to the inn, both Claude and Milly had started to eat breakfast. The content of the breakfast was: a piece of long bread, with a salad filled to the brim with some sort of white dressing. Seeing Claude who wiped away the white dressing stuck on to the corner of Milly's mouth, I thought to myself, "they really look like brothers and sisters, don't they?", and instantly Claude scowled in my direction.

Can she read my mind or something? It's a little scary to be honest...

[Welcome back, Zeph-kun]

[Your clothes are already so dirty, where did you go so early in the morning? Zeph]

[I've been training. I occasionally go hunting by myself]

[That's not fair! Are you trying to do this to catch up to me?!]

She's speaking like she's way ahead of me in terms of Magical power... Well I suppose in terms of levels she is indeed slightly above me.

[Well, if you like, I can bring you along next time? Let me just say that I always depart during the night]

Fufufu, Milly laughs as she sticks her tongue out. Although it is probably unlikely that Milly who is really delicate in the morning will be able to go with me at night.

[I also want to come alongg~]

I will pretend to not hear Claudes murmurs.

They've just got out of a light bath, and they were stuffing themselves with their breakfast, it could be seen that they were talking about something or other whilst having a lot of fun.

[By the way, what shall we do today?]

[I think that the mountain expedition we went to last time was really tiring~ Lydia also seems to be working at her store, don't you think that we can just take a good rest today?]

While extending her folded arms, Milly replied.

[For some reason, you're able to wake up quite early today haven't you?]

[Uuu-be quiet!]

Teasing Milly is quite fun.....just as I was thinking such things, both girls were staring in my direction.

[Zeph what are you going to do today?]

[N? Hmm after shopping around I will probably go back to training]

High Levelled Spirit Magic: Summon Servant, in order to perform this particular branch of magic high grade materials are necessary, furthermore, it is essential to increase the magic level of the Spirit category. Fortunately, I came across the King Nipper Card the other day, and worries about money were almost gone.

[Nnn well then, You've got to bring us along with you~!]

She jumps out from her seat with a kick as she points her index finger towards me, and Claude who nods in approval. I suppose I don't really mind it... With that we headed for the shopping district in Beruta.

[This money belongs to you Zeph, so you can use it however you want, alright?]

Milly says this as she passes me the money she got from Lydia the other day, it amounted to 20,000 Rupiah. If I'm not mistaken, Lydia did say something about this the other day.

[And, is there something that you wanted to buy?]

[I've been thinking of purchasing high grade mediums. From here on out, I was thinking of increasing the level of my Spirit Magic]

[Hee~ I've heard that not many people use that type of magic.....Well I guess it's your own money! It's up to you how you use it!]

[Well, can you guys help me look for materials to buy using that money?]

[Okay(~ ♪)]

As I said this, Milly looked towards Claude's direction with shining eyes.

[Claude, I will give you half the money, should we have a match to see who can purchase the most amount of materials?]

[Of course, I don't mind it]

Claude begins to grin as she smiled, and it seemed like sparks were coming out from each of the girls. I think that Claude's habit of seeking a match with others has spread to Milly. Milly is quite easily influenced by others isn't she?

I watched them off, as I gave them the, ready set go! Signal and they both ran towards the shopping stalls, I also go to search for high quality mediums myself. Because a High level medium is something that a monster from the Spirit Category drops, it is quite the rare item, therefore, it is not really possible to stock up in mass.

The only thing I can do is, purchase any and all of the High quality mediums in the shops. The fact that I obtained a King Nipper Card and exchanged it for a huge sum of money, is something that I haven't yet mentioned to the girls. Because the amount of money is so huge, I was afraid that it might have an adverse effect on our relationship if I told them. There has been multiple instances that I've seen, where a single person in the guild picks up a rare item, and it causes the guild to crumble.

Well, I don't think that Milly and Claude are those kinds of people, but just in case...

I looked through all the stores that sold high-level mediums and bought them. The number of mediums sold was even less than I had expected, moreover, the price for the mediums had a drastic range from 800 Rupia per piece to 2,000 rupia a piece. I bought around 300 pieces in total, and I thought that it would probably be impossible for me to look for these things every single day. I really want to find a way where I can regularly acquire this product at periodic intervals.....Come to think of it, Lydia has a really good knowledge of the stalls in the shopping district, and it's probably a good

idea to ask her about this. Let's contact her immediately using the Guild Messaging system.

[Lydia, are you free right now?]

[Ohh Zeph-chi? You talked to be so suddenly so I got a little surprised ~]

I'm a little worried about her calling me Zeph-chi, but I don't dare to rebut her statement.

(I want to purchase all the high-level mediums from the stores, would it be possible to buy them all up? I want to buy them at the price of 1,000 Rupl each. My budget is around 28 million Rupl)

(Ohhh~? Isn't that a huge sum of money~Nn! Zeph-chi, were you originally that rich?)

(Fufu.....Just this morning when I went out to hunt alone, I obtained a rare item drop. However, do you think you could keep this a secret from Milly and Claude? I think it is still too early for children like them to know. I was thinking of completely converting all of it into high-level mediums)

(Ahh~So it's like that.....Well if it's those two I don't think you have to worry so much but...I understand how Zeph-chi feels so I suppose I can keep it a secret for you)

(That would help me out)

Ahhaha Lydia was laughing as I expressed my thanks.

Lydia was a merchant and I thought that it would be alright to tell her because she would be accustomed to dealing with money. Moreover, I would not be able to process all that money by myself.

(By the way~ talking about collecting the mediums at a price of 1,000 Rupl a piece, if I was able to obtain it for an even lesser price, do you think I could take the difference as compensation?)

(Of course. I will entrust it as hush money)

(So it's our little secret isn't it Zeph-chi♪?)

Nihihi Lydia was laughing lewdly. I didn't dare to point out her evil laughter...

(.....Alright so, please take care of it)

(Okay~, leave it to me♪)

She accepted the fact with a merry mood but, I guess I have built a huge debt for myself. I have a feeling it will bite me in the back later. Meanwhile, the two girls had finished their shopping and came back. Claude looked the same as per usual, but Milly was looked disappointed. She's so easy to understand.....I bet that the winner is Claude again.

[Zeph-kun, using 10,000 Rupi, I've managed to acquire 15 high-level mediums]

[This is quite the amount. Did you bargain down the prices?]

[I will leave it up to your imagination]

Her eyes were shut and Claude hands me the high-level mediums with a composed face. "Don't get too overconfident, alright?" I said this as received the mediums.

[By the way Milly-san]

Claude turned around and was looking at Milly, on the other hand Milly was avoiding Claude's gaze.

[I think that I will use my privilege as the victor, right about now, will that be alright?]

Milly was about to escape from Claude, and Claude tightly grasped on to Milly. Claude was getting carried away from her victory and Milly was easily influenced by others. These two... are the type of people who would get ruined by gambling. By the way, the punishment game this time around was that the loser had to take on a cute haircut, and Milly's long twin tail hair was styled by Claude to look like two round dumplings.

[Wh....What do you think? Zeph?]

[Nn? I think it suits you quite well]

[Ehehe, Thank you♪]



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CHAPTER 55

WANARUTA CITY RUINS

—Wanaruta City Ruins.

From Beruta Town, it takes around 1 hour to teleport to this place, hundreds of years ago, this Wanaruta city ruins was once a town which prospered. According to a magician who used to live there, the city's inhabitants faced extermination and all that remained of it was a ruins. It used to be thought of as a big joke by the masses and it was not until the magician actually died that people finally started to believe in his words.

The next time someone went to visit the city, the buildings were still intact but no humans could be seen in sight, furthermore as a result of negative magical energy's accumulating, a dungeon was formed.

[It's really eerie isn't it....?]

[Well it is that kind of place after all]

[It's also quite spacious]

The three people were being vigilant of their surroundings as they made their way in. Although it was an open area, the stagnant air around the place causes the possibility of undead monsters to appear, it was one of the characteristics of this dungeon.

A white misty fog drifts about the area, sometimes even a black mist can appear and you can see a semblance of a humans face fading in the background of the mist.

Milly seemed to be somewhat accustomed to going to this kind of place so she didn't particularly feel anything special about it, however, Claude was without a doubt scared out of her wits. Perhaps Milly noticed this from Claude, Milly had an impish smile on her face as she stretched her hands forward towards Claude.

[Claude are you scared? Do you want to hold my hands?]

[I....I'm fine!]

Claude pouts as she turns the other way. Milly was laughing creepily with a “Hihihi” and although she couldn’t see it, Claude was actually already pulling on the cuff of my clothes as she shook and trembled *puru puru* (Slight trembling).

It’s really hard to move like this ya know? Claude...

This Wanaruta City Ruins was composed of three separate levels.

The first level, was compromised of the shopping district with the civilians once lived in.

The second level is the upscale residential areas where the nobles lived.

And the Third level was the research institutions where the magician would immerse himself in his study.

This place has a couple of high level undead monsters who build a nest for themselves within the dungeon, therefore, it is a really good place for me to raise my soul magic. The problem with this dungeon was that there was a lot of annoying demons, and hunting in the place solo would be really hard, this is the reason why I brought Milly and Claude with me today.

[Milly we will be entering the area where demons should show up soon. I will be relying on you to proceed as planned]

[Under~stood♪]

As she said this, Milly began to chant Blue Wave. A blue wave of magic spreads out around Milly, and after entering a couple of buildings it would dissipate after advancing a certain degree.

It was covering quite a large distance. It might even be twice the distance that I could cover...

The demons here like to hide amongst the mist and surprise you when you least expect it, therefore using a magical wave with a wide area of effect at constant intervals is a standard procedure when watching out for those demonic surprise attacks. We walked for a little while more, and Milly casted blue wave again, but this time a sort of groaning sound could be heard from a little distance behind us. When I

looked behind us, a transparent ghost like monster was wet because of blue wave and it's hateful voice was raised towards us.

This was a demon from the first level of the Wanaruta City Ruins.

—Mist race.

When it is moving around, it places a sort of black coating on itself which can turn its body transparent as it approaches you slowly. Like I said there are plenty of annoying demons here, this particular demon reveals itself even if it's damaged just a little bit, but if it gets the jump on you it will be a nuisance.

[Blue Gale!]

Although Milly quickly casted blue gale, the mist race didn't seem to take much damage from the tornado of wind as it broke through and begins to rush towards us.

Although Claude's sword was supposed to be broken from our previous boss encounter at the Sunray Mountains this was not a problem. Before we arrived here, I already casted my combination magic of White Crash and White Weapon which gave birth to a new ability the "Lighting Blade" and this was the glittering weapon in Claude's hands.

She avoids the incoming talons of the mist race monster, and using that sword she struck a blow....

[Hyaaaaaaaaah!?!]

Is not what happened...Just when I thought she was going to strike back, she had actually gone around behind me and hid...

Oi stop it you baka Claude...

What's the point if the vanguard hides themselves behind the rear guard. The mist race doesn't care about this though, and it immediately switched its target to me as it swung its sharp fingernails. Tsk tsk, I clicked my tongue, and held my hand up towards the Mist race.

[White Crash!]

I discharged a point blank White Crash right into the Mist race as a blinding light swallowed it's figure whole....However even my white crash was able to be endured and the fingernails were already before my eyes.

[Zeph!]

Although I managed to avoid the full blow by using a back step, it apparently still grazed me. Blood dribbles into my eye and I can't see ahead.....However there is no problem. I already know it's in front of me so I casted White crash one more time.

[Giii!?]

[Blue Gale!]

The Mist race raised a voice of agony after being subsequently hit by Milly's magic and it was completely destroyed. After receiving a barrage of attacks from both Milly and I, the Mist race dispersed from the air.

[Are you alright!? Zeph!]

[Well, it's only a little scratch]

I wiped the blood off my forehead and the cut itself was only a superficial one. It was already beginning to close itself. Claude was looking at us with guilty upturned eyes.

[I ahh.....I'm so sorry]

[You don't have to mind it okay? Everyone has things they are not good at dealing with, besides you can start improving from now ♪]

[That's true, it will be good if you can overcome this as soon as possible]

Both Milly and I had the same idea as we grabbed on Claude and made sure she couldn't run away from the position of vanguard.

[Umm...Milly-san? Zeph-kun?]

[For the time being, all the monsters that come out from now will be defeated by Claude♪]

[This is only natural]

I was gripping on to Claude's hands which was holding on to the lighting blade and Milly was gripping on to her hand which was holding on to the shield. Her arms were being held and forcibly being operated by me and Milly as we tried to make her fight the monsters she was scared of in order to make her overcome her fears.

Milly was casting blue wave as she talked in order to search for monsters. And it seems that something got caught in the wave as a cry from a Mist race was heard ahead of us.

[Oh, the enemy has showed up. Let's see what you've got Claude]

[Go get them! Claude Shield!]

[Hiiiiiii!?!]

Milly operated Claude's arm which was holding the shield to block the attack from the Mist Race and I used the sword of light to pierce it. It was a beautiful combination of attack and defence in my opinion.

Perhaps because we were manipulating her movements, Claude was also trying her hardest to face her fears. Even though her eyes were going around in circles she still kept her gaze on the Mist Race, however her feet was consistently backing away. In order to lift her spirits a little I decided to spank her in the butt, and she raised a little shriek "Hii".

[Take your stance firmly! Your feet are getting wobbly Claude!]

[Ah! Heyy Zeph! In the midst of her confusion what are you doing?!]

[Haaah!? I...I'm obviously hyping her up aren't I!?]

[Then pwease take your hands of me~]

Claude suddenly talked in a strange voice so I stopped my movements for a second. Milly was dexterously moving around and using the shield to evade the blows of the Mist Race. She's doing really well...

I also can't afford to lose to her, I must hold on to Claude's hand and use the sword to attack as well. The more I used the sword the weaker it's light got, and by the time we defeated the Mist Race, the Lightning blade had already disappeared completely.

As expected unless I can extend the duration of the spell, even if I created a magical sword, it will disappear soon after using it. Well considering the fact that I am steady increasing the level of my White Crash, I don't really mind recreating the sword more often.

I was making sure by checking frequently with Scout Scope during combat and apparently every time she attacked using the Lightning Blade the level of White Crash seems to go up. After all I came here in order to train the level of my magic so, in actuality the fact that the sword keeps disappearing is quite convenient for me.

For a little while after that, we tried to get Claude used to fighting ghost like monsters and we were controlling her movements like a marionette however, towards the end she seemed to finally get used to it and she was able to move her own body by herself. Although it might only be a desperation move on her part...

CHAPTER 56

OVERCOMING HER FEARS

We were having a short break right now. We have been training Claude and by the evening she was becoming accustomed to the extent that she could fight alone. When I launched a double white sphere at the Mist race, Claude was able to kill it in one of her sword blows.

[Your movements have improved, Claude]

[Is....Is that so? Ehheheh]

[Yeah, yeah! You're so cool Claude! Just like a pretty boy♪]

Milly was letting out a carefree smile, and Claude could only smile back bitterly. It's not fair, when I call her a pretty boy, she always complains back.... When the Mist race disappear I see a high-level medium being dropped of its corpse.

[Ah, it dropped again. Zeph-kun]

[It drops so often doesn't it~ ♪ Can I also try using it?]

[It's still too early for Milly]

Whilst saying this, I picked up the high-rank medium and placed it into my pouch. White sphere and White crash requires the use of high grade mediums to cast, on top of this what I used was a white sphere which was amplified to double the strength using my time square (When using time square it costs two high-ranked mediums to cast the spell however, the levelling rate of my Spirit Magic is also doubled). The magical sword I created for Claude was using a mixture of White Shot and White Weapon. These two spells are only medium ranked spells so they didn't really have that much destructive power in them.

It was true that Spirit Magic is much more effective against the undead, however considering how skilled Milly was with Blue magic, her Blue Gale would probably be just as strong if not stronger than her using Spirit Magic for the first time. If she purposely uses the high costing mediums just to try things out when she can already

substitute her damage with a more efficient magic, it would honestly be a waste of resources.

[What should we do guys? Should we head back home?]

We have been hunting for a long period of time now so it's probably about time to head back. The sky was also beginning to darken.

[That's true, we don't really have to push ourselves too hard] (Milly Speaking)

[I am also a little tired] (Claude speaking)

This is because today, we made Claude stand in the vanguard position all day. On top of this both Milly and I toyed around with her quite a lot. When Claude turns her neck, a cracking sound could be heard. Milly stealthily closes behind Claude and creeps out her hand towards Claude's white shoulders and begins to give her a massage.

[Hyaaaah!? Wha....What are you doing Milly-san!]

[Nfufu~ ♪ You are so stiff here aren't you~?]

Claude was trying to escape from Milly by twisting and turning her body, but Milly was adamantly clinging on to her. I think she gave up on running away? But the moment she accepted the massage her face changed into one that seemed to feel good as she started to purr like a cat. Seeing this spectacle I think that Milly must be really good at giving massages.....Maybe next time I will ask her to give me one as well. Whilst looking at the two girls playing around with each other, I chanted Scout Scope on myself.

Zeph Einstein

Level 39

[Red] Magical Value 30, Magical Limit 62

[Blue] Magical Value 27, Magical Limit 87

[Green] Magical Value 28, Magical Limit 99

[Sky] Magical Value 29, Magical Limit 89

[Spirit] Magical Value 25, Magical Limit 97

Magical Value 1420/1765

Moreover I managed to raise the level of my White Sphere to level 7 and the level of my White Crash to level 9. The amount of high-level mediums I used was approximately 450 pieces. The supplies I bought from the stalls have almost been used up. I am going to have to backorder some products from Lydia in a while. I should ask her about it when I get back home.

Nevertheless, I have been able to rapidly raise the levels of my spirit based magic considerably efficiently. When fighting against strong monsters and continuously shooting magic towards them, the levelling rate of spells increases quite a bit, however, when facing such strong monsters one must also be careful and prepare their defenses well, you can't just keep attacking blindly, therefore, having Claude as a vanguard this time is really convenient for the group. At the pace I am going, it doesn't seem that far before I can use the spell Summon Servant.

By the time we teleported away from the Wanaruta City Ruins and reached our town of Beruta, it was already night time.

[I have a little something to do, so can you guys go ahead and return to the inn first?]

[Nn, I understand. Let's go, Claude]

[Yes]

I parted with the two girls, and whilst making my way towards Lydia's store, I sent out a guild message towards her.

(Lydia are you free right now? I wanted to talk to you about the High-grade mediums....)

.....I waited for a little while but there was no response. Maybe she was serving some important customers? She might be really busy right now, so I decided to just go to her store directly and see the situation. After buying around 200 high-grade mediums from the nearby stalls, I head into Lydia's store. Lydia was nowhere to be seen inside the store, instead her dad was coming to greet me.

[Hello]

[Oh, Zeph-kun, it's just you by yourself? Did you have something you wanted from Lydia?]

[Ahh, yeah]

[If you are looking for Lydia, she's at the back]

Saying this he pointed his thumb towards the back of the store.

[Can I go see her?]

[Yeah sure. By the way, has your relationship progressed with Lydia?]

[Of course not?!]

[Hahaha, you sound so suspicious~ are you telling the truth ?]

I suddenly remembered the fact that I thrust my hands into her clothes when we were at the Sun Ray Mountain range, and my face reddens a little. The father-san just looks at me whilst grinning. Surely, he didn't notice anything.....?

I was being teased as he led me into the backyard, and as I approached the place I heard a sound of dry wind *Swoosh*. A big tree grows in the backyard and many logs were wrapped in worn-out blankets as they hung around the surroundings of the big tree. What I saw there was Lydia who seemed to be dancing whilst striking and lunging at the logs. Lydia launched a kick towards the log which was suspended like a punching bag. I could hear the sounds of the log as it creaked from being kicked. The shaking log was hit twice, no three times with her fist, and after kicking it, the log dances in the air. Just as the log was about to swing back down she rotated her body and performed a revolving kick sending it flying again.

Gakon! A nice sound echoes whenever she kicks the log, she kicks it with such force that the log flies to the limit of the rope which was attached to the big tree.

[Fuui~]

Lydia took a breather and wiped her sweat from her forehead, she had glistening skin and her hair was shaking buoyantly. I think she was in her training gear, because she was wearing a black shirt without a sleeve and short pants. You could see that she was training really hard as even from this distance, you could tell that both her pieces of clothing were drenched in sweat.

[That was splendid]

I was clapping my hands as I called out to Lydia whilst walking towards her.....

[Wha.....Why is Zeph-kun in here?!]

For some reason or other, Lydia was acting really strangely and she was moving backwards.

[Well, I tried to message you using the guild message but you didn't reply, so I thought to just visit you here.....Did I come at a bad time?]

[It's not that you can't visit but....Mouu~ Dad shouldn't bring you in here.....It's really embarrassing to have you see me like this.....]

Whilst she was grumbling to herself and muttering her own soliloquy, the glass next to her was taken and she greedily drank from it with a *gulp, gulp*.

[What do you need to feel embarrassed about? Aren't you always in a similar type of outfit?]

When I asked her in doubt, she replied in a seemingly unsatisfied tone.

[It's not about the clothes I'm wearing.....I just don't like being seen in this place! When I was a child, one of my friends saw me in here training and then they kept of making fun of me for it]

Is that why, she does the practice in her backyard?

[.....I see, but I feel that you are really amazing for being able to stay disciplined and continue to train even after they made fun of you]

When I said this, Lydia's face looked really sweet.

[.....That's true, father once told me that when the time comes, I would be able to protect my most precious baby with the strength, so day after day, I would continue to train even though it took a lot of blood, sweat and tears]

Lydia has her own natural affinity with being able to easily master physical arts, however, as expected from her she is not only talented, she also puts in the hard work that comes with it. As for me, I only train in sorcery right now, however, if I was able to learn physical arts, I would definitely be able to more efficiently use my magic in

many different situations. I think that it might be a good idea if Lydia is willing to teach me.

[If it's alright with you, do you think that you could teach me some martial arts?]

[Eh? Zeph-kun, even though you are a magician, you want to learn martial arts?]

[Even for magicians, if they are able to fight in hand-to-hand combat, it would be a lot more efficient don't you think?]

I realized this fact after battling the Sunny Raven. Even when I was battling the Mist Race earlier, if only I could move a little faster, it's attacks wouldn't even be able to graze me.

[U~nn.....I think its fine but.....Doesn't this mean that we will be training together? I'm a little embarrassed~.....]

[I'm relying on you]

[.....I understand. Let's do it!]

[Thank you]

When I bowed and gave Lydia my thanks, she smiled bashfully as she laughed.

CHAPTER 57

SPARRING

[Kuu.....Stop.....Any further than this is and....]

[Nfufufu...You are so stiff aren't cha Zeph-kun♪ It's alrightt, you can leave it to big sis.....Here we go....Nn]

Bokibokibokibokiboki

[Nngaaahh~~!~?]

[Ahhaha, what an amazing sound~]

Both my feet were being stretched out, and my upper body was slowly descending towards the ground, a terrible sound of cracking bones resounded. Lydia was leaning on to my back as she was trying to help me stretch my legs. At first I was pleasantly surprised at the feeling of her soft breasts pressing against my back, but now, it wasn't even about that anymore.

Nevertheless, this painful torture continued every single day for two weeks, and Lydia was persistently and forcibly "developing" my flexibility, as of now my body was a lot more supple than it was before.

[Nn~ There is still plenty of stiff area's around your body, isn't there? The first thing you need to have when practicing martial arts is flexibility! This is because if your body is supple and flexible, you will be able to react to the opponents movements with a greater amount of speed!]

Whilst saying this, she lifts one of her own legs into the air, and she is able to make it touch her own nose. As expected, she has a really flexible body doesn't she?.....It would seem that I still have a long way to go.

[Now then, since we have finished the warm-up, should we lightly~ begin some Sparring ?]

Half of the training time I have with Lydia is actually spent of warming up the body. She takes about 1 hour in order to deliberately perform calisthenics which has the purpose of loosening up the body whilst also intensifying concentration, only after this will the actual martial arts training begin.

[Start off slowly at first....Okay?]

Lydia was in a stance where, both of her hands and legs are in an open position, the body is turned sideways towards me, and her left hand was set up for defense and in a position to counter attack.

[Please come and attack whenever you feel like it. I will block all the attacks, so don't worry]

I was trying to copy Lydia's stance but compared to her it was completely obvious that my stance was that of an amateurs.

[—Come]

Because injuring the other party is not the purpose of this exercise, none of us made any fists. Along with her words, I extended my open palm in a thrusting motion, but Lydia was able to use her left hand to easily block it. Twice, three times I struck out with my palm targeting her lower right and left but everything was nullified with her left hand.

[You are concentrating too much on where you are attacking]

Along with the sound of her words, her left hand flickers with lightning speed, and similar to a whip, it stopped right before my eyes, and.... Pechin! she suddenly flicked my forehead.

[Alright, first blow♪....Come now, let's continue]

Laughing with a smile, Lydia rebuilds her fighting stance. I also reorganize my breath and retook my stance.

—Like this, we repeated this kind of exchange a few more times, and although I had become drenched in sweat, Lydia wasn't even sweating one bit. Well I guess this is a natural thing, considering the fact that Lydia didn't even have to use her right hand to nullify my attacks.

[Haah-Haah-.....]

[Let's end it here for today, shall we?]

I try to compose myself, as I looked up towards Lydia. Lydia seemed to be taking a playful stance whenever she spars with me, almost like she was having a little bit of fun. I could tell that compared to when she usually fights in real combat, I was not yet an adequate enough opponent to go up against her. Even though there was a clear difference in our martial abilities, and this was a natural thing, I didn't like the fact that I was being underestimated.

[.....Umm, that is, could I ask you for one more round?]

[I don't really mind it, but are you sure you aren't overexerting yourself?]

[Well, Lydia seems to be taking a more easy going stance, I bet that you are going easy on me, right?]

[Muu.....Well, that is.....]

Lydia seemed to have a troubled expression, but I continued anyways.

[I want to go all out from here on out, do you mind it?]

As soon as I said this, Lydia's expression changed a little, it kind of looked a little like when she was in actual combat.

[.....In that case, let's see what you've got]

She immediately lowered her waist and her hands and feet are extended outwards. If you gave her the usual weapon she equipped which was the axe, then she would look like the Lydia in real combat. I guess this means that she is finally taking me seriously. I immediately chanted out Time Square, and black boots simultaneously.

[Black Boots Double]

My body was instantly enveloped in the power of the wind, Although I took my normal stance, in Lydia's eyes, it probably looked like I was moving in fast-forward speed, her eyes were a little shocked as she stared at me in amazement.

[Ahaha♪ That's cheating you know~?]

[Well I am after all a magician. When a mage uses magic, what's so unfair about that?]

[I guess you've got a point.Moreover, it's true that if it's like this, it will become much more fun!♪]

[Here I come]

I kicked the ground and my body flew behind Lydia, I thrust my palms out to Lydia's seemingly defenseless back, however I only hit the empty air. In the next instant, her long white arm twines around my right hand like a snake, I immediately attempt to counter by grasping on to her left hand. However her arm which I was supposed to grab, suddenly bends and weaves away. I move back and take a little bit of distance in order to rebuild my stance, Lydia was loosening her shoulders whilst she laughed. Since a little while ago, Lydia has only been using her left hand.

—Is she planning on using just her left arm until the end of our sparring session?

As soon as she rebuilt her stance, this time around I immediately charged at her from the front. My leg muscles had been reinforced with magic, so I instantaneously appeared before her, in order to push me aside, she launches her left palm, I immediately head butted her with all my strength and I received the blow directly to my face.

[Iih!?!]

[Guooh.....!?!]

I received the blow to my face before she completely extended her arms, so the power was halved, but even so it hurt like hell. Nevertheless Lydia was probably surprised at my unexpected counter attack, she let out a small moan, and her body was shifted out of position.

She swayed backwards and her feet shot upwards. And yet, Lydia's balance did not break, she appeared to float in midair doing a single revolution before landing on her feet as she tried to distance herself from me.

As expected of her excellent sense of balance, however, I also predicted this much would happen. I immediately followed up with a forward dash and extended my palm towards Lydia who had just barely landed.

She tried to avoid my blow, but considering the fact that I was aiming directly at the center of her body, in addition to targeting her from behind, even though it was Lydia we were talking about here, it was unlikely that she could avoid the blow from such an angle. Lydia who had just barely landed from her midair flip tried to turn around, but it was too slow!

——Punyonn~

And my palm felt an extremely soft sensation. My finishing blow which was supposed to win the match actually sank into Lydia's breasts.

[Wai.....]

Both of our movements stopped. Her composed look that she usual had completely disappeared, her face began to blush, as her body stiffened, but my hand isn't brushed away. For a few seconds, we both just stood there in a daze, the thing that broke the atmosphere was the sound of the door opening to the backyard.

[Mou~ Zeph I noticed you were going out at the same time every day, and it turns out that you were always going to Lydia's place weren't you?] (Milly Speaking)

[I also really wanted Lydia-san to teach me martial arts, but it seems that you secretly asked her to teach you, that's not fair....You know.....?] (Claude Speaking)

The moment Milly's and Claude's voices were heard, I was able to regain my composure somewhat. I instantly let go of my hand from her chest and it bounced back perkily, however the two girls who saw this scene suddenly lost their voice as time stopped once again.

[No.....You two, this is all just a misunderstanding. When people are sparring these kinds of things might happen sometimes]

I was flustered as I quickly thought of an explanation, and Claude replies to me with a smile.

[Th.....That's true. If you do sparring, that kind of thing might happen, I suppose]

Although Claude was smiling as she talked, I felt like her smiling face was really scary, as she began to grasp the new sword she bought the other day and brandished it with her right hand.

.....However, Milly was one step ahead as she raised her hands towards me, and a light of magical energy was crackling in her hands, Claude who saw this was startled.

[Wait.....Milly-san, I think that will be going a little too far! This is after all Lydia's home!?!]

[Let go of me Claude! I definitely won't forgive himmm!]

Claude reacted immediately and tries to hold Milly back. I also hold her back and try to soothe her. Although it was a little late, Lydia who had previously blanked out, was also trying to stop Milly.

CHAPTER 58

LARGE STAIRWAY

—At the Wanaruta City Ruins.

Lydia was taking a break from work today, so she was also able to come along with us.

[Ahh~ it's been quite a while since we all went hunting together! Elder sis is so excited~!] (Lydia Speaking)

Ohh~ Lydia was raising her right hand in the air as she cheerfully shouted.

[Lydia is coming with us today, what do you guys think of going deeper into the dungeon?]

[I think that's a good idea, I think we've gotten quite used to the first level already♪]

[This is your first time coming here, will that be fine for you Lydia-san? The demons here are really scary you know.....?]

Claude raises her arms loosely and takes the pose of a ghost.

[Ahhahah, On that subject, I've heard about it from Zeph-kun you know? He told me that Claude-chan is scared of spirit type demons. That's so cuteee~ ♪]

[Wha....! That's all in the past.....I'm not like that anymore, okay?!]

Claude gets defensive at the unexpected counter. But in the next moment she turns around to face me, and gives me this awkward smile.

[Ze~ph~Ku~nn]

Oh yeah, when I was training with Lydia, she asked me quite a lot of questions about the hunting trips I had, I have a feeling that I answered most of her questions. I think that I may have said too many unnecessary details. Claude was scowling at me as the four of us continued on our way.

Milly was periodically casting Blue Wave in order to scout out any nearby enemies that were hiding. The two girls who were walking in front of us acting as vanguards had White Weapon enchanted to their weapons.

[Oh, is that it?]

It seems that Lydia spotted a Mist Race that was lurking in the shadows. The Mist Race which was discovered by Lydia, buoyantly floats into the air and tries to disappear from sight, it comes to approach us however.... Perhaps it was because the spirit had already been discovered, it could not completely meld itself into the background and we could still manage to see its diluted body as it continually shifted in and out of this state, just like that it came to attack us.

A demon like this whose main purpose is to disappear and attack from the shadows, has a tendency to be weak in terms of willpower, therefore, once they have been discovered, they will not use additional magic. To begin with their existence as a spirit in itself is quite unstable and there are not many monsters in this category who can use magic. Lydia and Claude stabs the monster, Milly casts Blue Gale whilst I cast a double White Sphere, using this combination attack, the Mist Race gets annihilated.

This time around our objective was to hunt in the second level up the dungeon, so we advanced straight ahead and exited the shopping district, we went up a big set of stairs which led to the center of the city. The area was considerably spacious and the stairway was really long, it would seem that the buildings are tall in this district.

After we climbed for about half a minute, I looked down towards the shopping district and I saw a superb view. I was so high up that I could see the whole area of the shopping district below us. The people who lived in this area certainly had a magnificent view.

Suddenly I heard a sound of ragged breathing beside me, when I looked to my side, Milly seemed to be out of breath. After all the stairs were steep, and we were at quite the height right now.

[Milly are you alright?]

[I'm.....Fi-....ne.....]

She was gasping for air with a "Haah, Haah", and she didn't look good to me at all. Lydia and Claude were both in front of us as they were scouting for any potential

enemies ahead of us. That's because if we got attacked in this cramped space, it would be really bad.

[Hey, hold on to me]

I stretched my hands out to her and at first she looked really happy as she reached out to me, but then she suddenly withdrew her hands and shook her head.

[.....Thank you, Zeph. But I want to do this alone with my own strength]

When I think about it, even when we were going up the mountain she was also like this.

[I understand. But don't push yourself too hard okay?]

[I know]

"Nihihi" she was letting out a strained smile whilst she answered me. Well, I suppose she isn't the type of girl who would just give up because of a little tiredness. Nevertheless, falling from this height will be a bad joke, so I stood on the behind her just in case.

[Zeph? Why are you going behind me?]

[I was thinking that if you fell, I could catch you]

[.....Don't look up, okay?]

Up.....? When I thought about what this meant and tried looking up, I saw Milly's fluttering skirt. Ah, so that's what she meant by don't look up.....

[H.....Hey! I told you not to look up didn't I?!]

[Oii, don't move around so much! Milly!]

Milly was holding down her skirt whilst kicking about, I was trying to get her to calm down but she lost her balance and fell towards me.

[Kyaah!? I....idiot! Don't touch me in such a weird place!]

[I'm telling you.....the stupid one is you! Don't jump around so much in this kind of place! Milly!]

She was struggling to get free of me, and I was trying to suppress her violent movements but I couldn't really do it well.

[Wait! D....Don't fondle my breasts!]

Apparently...I seem to be touching her chest.

[.....I'm not really fondling it, though?]

I was brushing my hands gently across Milly's breasts but in order to stabilize her balance as much as possible there was no other choice but for me to grab on to it.

[Hyaaaaan!?!]

Milly raises a shrill voice and her body which was held in my embrace sprang up. At that moment, I also lost my balance and I was tottering my way down the big staircase as I tried to steady myself, I caught myself on the railing, and I slid my body down as I let out a sigh of relief.

[Ah, I'm sorry Milly. I was messing around too much]

[....Bakaa, you need to be more careful....]

When I apologized to her sincerely, Milly's face was blushing a little bit. She was raving on a little while ago but now she was really calm, she was being quiet and meek like a docile sheep. Hearing Milly's shriek, both Claude and Lydia descended the stairs however, Milly just waved at them from a distance. She told them, "we are fine, we are coming up soon".

[Then, I think it's about time you got off me? Milly]

[Eh.....?Ahh, yeah]

I gently let Milly down but as I did this, I heard a cracking sound *Pishiri*. Not only that, the crackling sounds rang continuously and my body shook violently as I lost my balance.

[Kyaaaaahhh!?!]

[Milly-chan! Zeph-kun!]

Lydia run down the stairway at an incredible speed and reaches her hand out to us.

[You can't! Lydia-san! You will fall down with them!]

Claude says this and pulls Lydia's hands back. That's a good judgment, if it was only Milly who fell with me I felt it was barely okay, but if I also had to protect Lydia from the fall damage, I don't have the confidence it will go so well. The staircase was crumbling down, I held on to Milly as I chanted teleport.....However it didn't work.

Because the ground was not stabilised I could not concentrate properly, and it was not possible for me to invoke teleport. I tightly squeezed Milly towards my chest, and embraced her firmly with both my hands so as to never let go.

[Zeph-kuun!]

[Milly-chaann!]

Their two sorrowful yells were getting further and further away. And soon the sound of the wind drowned out the sound of their shouts.

[Spirits of the earth, protect this body with thine armor]

[Safe Protection!]

The moment I finished my incantation, my body thoroughly hit the ground and a ballistic impact travelled through my body. I felt the sensation of blood dripping down my head. Shit, it seems that I hit my head really hard....My consciousness is starting to blur. However I'm glad. Although Milly was unconscious, she didn't seem to be injured.

Although I tried to prop myself up, the hand which supported my body slipped and I hit my head on to the ground again. Crap, this isn't good, my leg won't move properly and my eyes are starting to go dark.

I need to rest.....my body.....

My field of vision was really dark but just before I lost consciousness, I managed to see a dark shadow of some sort coming towards us.

CHAPTER 59

NIGHTFALL

Pitter patter, the sound of water droplets falling on to my cheeks.

Tsu...Crap, my head is still spinning. When I tried to forcefully open up my eyelids, the thing I saw in front of me was a skeleton which had already begun to rot. It seems like the years had already taken its toll on the skeleton as some of its parts had already begun to crumble.

[.....Milly?]

I was supposed to be carrying Milly firmly within my arms, but right now she was nowhere to be seen. There was no one who answered my murmurs, and the vicinity remains very quiet. I suddenly remembered the figure of the black shadow that appeared before me just before I lost consciousness. Although I can't be certain just from seeing its shadow, but that was most likely a Mist Race.

Don't tell me she went and fought it by herself.....? My blood went cold imagining the worst possible scenario and I got off my feet at once and began searching for Milly.

[Milly! Where are you?! Milly!]

I crushed the skeleton under my foot, and called out Milly's name, but all I got back in return was the echo of my voice. I can't stop worrying about her...

Whenever I walked I would step on another skeleton and break it. However, there is no room for me to think about that. More importantly, there is a random building that's blocking my view. Everywhere I looked it was dark, and the field of vision is not good either. The building was also worn-out there was also plenty of small shacks, it would seem that this area was previously the slums of the city.

[Mi.....]

As I tried to raise my voice again, I noticed a presence was coming to approach me at the front. *knack, clack* the footsteps of a person was coming closer. The other party seems to have noticed my presence and they stopped walking as well.

[Is this the important thing you are looking for?]

What stood in front of me was actually Seruberie holding on to Milly. Milly seems to be unconscious as her arms and feet were dangling and there isn't any sign of movements.

[Seruberie.....!]

[This girl is considerably tired. Although I have already given her some light treatment, it would be better if she could rest firmly]

Seruberie passes Milly along to me, and I hug her closely with all my might. Milly's face was a little blue, she was sweating bullets, and even her breathing was uneven. Did she get a fever because she overworked herself? Her temperature also seems to be rising quite a bit.

[You shouldn't bring girl's along to play in such a dangerous place, you know?]

Seruberie was giving me an earnest look and I could do nothing to rebut such a statement. Although she always had such an energetic face, should I have treated Milly.....like a small kid that I needed to worry about?

[You should be thankful to this girl you know? Whilst you were unconscious, she was fighting all the evil spirits in order to protect you, for a long period of time]

[Milly.....]

Before I passed out, I saw the shadow of a Mist Race, it seems that Milly was the one who protected me from it. When I looked closely, I could see that Milly's clothes were in tatters, there are a lot of places torn, I can perceive that she has been in an intense fight.

A magician usually fights something after taking their distance, so if they had to protect something whilst fighting, they would be really disadvantaged.

[Well then, allow me to take my leave. From the fact that you are here, I won't treat you like some kind of kid, but do take care of yourself]

[Please wait! Seruberie!]

She turned around to look behind her as I called out to her.

[That is....I'm really thankful. If Seruberie didn't come here, then perhaps both Milly and I would have already died. I really want to convey my gratitude]

[.....This is one of the lairs that I hunt in. If you were to die here, it would be troubling for me. So I only did it for myself, you don't have to worry about it]

[.....Even so, thank you]

I bowed my head and took Seruberie's hand to convey my appreciation, but when I did so, perhaps it was unexpected but, she seems to have a really surprised expression on her face. And then, she placed her hand on top of my head as she looked at me with really gentle eyes and said.

[.....Zeph, don't ever let go of the things that are important to you. By the time that you've lost them, no matter what you try to do, it will be too late by then, alright?]

Scrub scrub, Seruberie was patting my head a little violently. Oh yeah, if I think back, there was this one time that when I was really down in the past and she would try to comfort me like this. Having remembered such a nostalgic scene, my eyes started to become really hot.

[.....I know]

I repressed the overflowing tears that were seemingly about to flow out as I answered Seruberie, after that she gave me a smile and flew over to teleport into the distance.

[Nn.....]

Milly who I was holding, let out a small groan. I feel like her face is becoming even paler than it was before.

[.....This fever is really bad]

When I think about it, Milly who was still a child, followed my hard lifestyle every single day. Even if she were to show signs of fatigue, it wasn't weird in the slightest..... But it seems like she was putting up a strong front to everyone.

(It will be too late after you lost the thing most important to you)

Recalling Seruberie's words, I made an effort to embrace Milly a little more.

[For now, I need to warm up her body.....]

I broke the door of one of the buildings to collect wood, started a fire using my magic, and after taking off my coat and laying in on the ground, I tried to put Milly down, however it was useless. Milly's face was still really pale, besides her clothes were also full of sweat. I took off all our clothes and placed them on top of her, I also increased the size of the fire, and checked to make sure no unwanted presence was approaching.

[Milly! Get a hold of yourself! Milly!]

[.....uu.....Zeph.....]

When I held Milly hands, she responded by calling out my name whilst trembling. *clatter clatter* There was no color of blood in her complexion and her breathing was as thin as a bug. If it continues on like this then.....Damn it! Although it's a little embarrassing but, if this will save Milly's life then I will do it! Steeling myself, I cling very closely to Milly who was lying on the floor, as I embraced her sharing as much bodily warmth as I could.

Her body was ghastly cold almost like it was a corpse, and when I grabbed on to her hand, she could only weakly return the grasp.

[.....Don't die, Milly.....!]

And all night long I continued to cast healing as I held her in my arms.

Before I knew it, I was running out of my magic reserves and as dawn approached I started to doze off.

—The next morning

[Nn.....Uoh!?!]

When I opened my eyes, Milly peaceful sleeping face was right in front of me so I got shocked and raised my voice. Even though she look emancipated yesterday, right now her condition has stabilized and her face had a slight tinge of red to it, she had a tranquil sleeping face.

[.....Thank god]

I calmed myself down but when I remembered the fact that I was holding on to Milly's soft hands, my heart throbbed.

Although I had the urge to wash my face and clean up, Milly would not let go of my hand, so I couldn't really move. When I thought about it carefully, if Milly woke up and saw this situation, wouldn't this be really bad for me? I wanted to shake off Milly hand, but if I tried to go all out and shake it with a lot of force, I was afraid that she would wake up, so I couldn't really do that either.

[Crap.....I should at least put some clothes back on....]

Just when I was about to take my clothes which were on top of her, her eyelids started to flutter as they began to lightly open. She looked straight at me for a couple of seconds then she closed her eyes, and then after a while she opened them and looked at me again. Watching the series of events happen, my mind just completely froze and my body also tensed up. Switching her glances between my naked body and also at her own barely covered up body, her face began to redden and....she shouted...

[KyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!]

I was trying to justify what was happening, and Milly started to hit my chest with her small hands, as she cried out saying gibberish words.

[\$ # \$ # & % & # % \$ & ~ ~ ~]

[Calm down! I'm telling you I didn't do anything suspicious to you! Milly! O...Oi! Don't start casting magic! Stop!]

In the end she settled down after about 30 minutes. And although she settled down, she could not look me in the eyes as she turned her gaze away every time our eyes met.

[Umm, Milly. I've said this many times, but....]

[.....I know. I'm not really.....angry anymore.... besides it's just that I don't know how to face you right now]

To be honest, I was also at a loss as to how I should act in front of Milly. Scratching my head we were both speechless, and an awkward silence filled the room.

[.....Zeph]

[.....What is it?]

[That is....Can we keep this a secret from the others?]

[Ah.....Of course we aren't going to tell them you baka!]

[.....Then, I will forgive you♪]

Whilst saying such a thing, Milly turned her face only half way towards me as she laughed with a red face.

CHAPTER 60

DISPATCH OF MAGICIANS

[Ah! Milly-san! Zeph-kun!]

Although we should have been too far to contact each other via guild messaging, they probably noticed the smoke coming out of the bonfire and drew closer to us. With that, we were finally able to come into contact with both Lydia and Claude through the guild messaging system.

They probably looked for us all night long as they ran around escaping from the monsters. The two of them were coming towards us from a distance and they seemed worn out as their movements were sluggish. Even so their smiling faces did not show how tired they were.

The Wanaruta City Ruins was quite the high level dungeon, so in normal circumstances, beginners like these two girls would not attempt to hunt in this place just yet. This fact was the same for Milly, and I was starting to think that perhaps I may have pushed them too hard...

[.....Zeph]

Milly looked in my direction and even though she was speaking quietly she was talking in a strong tone.

[All of us came here, because we wanted to, so... Don't blame yourself, okay?]

Milly was smiling as she said this to me. Does she know what I was thinking? That is truly surprising.

[.....I suppose Milly is not one to be underestimated]

[Well, after all I am the leader of the group♪ So its fine if you want to rely on me, okay?]

[I suppose so. The fact that I have been able to accomplish my objectives at such a fast pace is all thanks to everyone's hard work]

[Your objective?]

[It's the same as Milly's]

Milly was looking at me in wonder so I started to rub her head, and then I hugged her.

[Wh....wait.....! Stop it! Zeph! Everyone is coming.....]

[Isn't this what we normally do?] You don't have to worry so much, Milly]

[Normally....You don't go that far....]

Milly was looking down as she meekly protests, but the last part of her words seem to vanish.

I truly have good companions. My eyes were moistened slightly, and the appearance of Claude and Lydia who was coming to approach us was distorted.

—No, something is wrong.

The ground was distorted and the dust in the air clouded my vision.

[Both of you get away!]

When I shouted at Claude and Lydia who was coming towards us, they both got shocked and stopped their movements. I was still holding on to Milly's head as I immediately flew backwards.

Blue light rises from the ground as the space is slightly distorted around the area, from the light, two shadows resembling humans comes out.

[Nn~Where could we be? Azelea senpai? It seems that we are in a dungeon of some sort.....?]

[You need to get your act together, Grain. In the eastern continent, there aren't many well-known dungeons with so much magical density. We are obviously at the Wanaruta City Ruins]

The two people who appeared from the spatial interference was a woman and a man.

Her black long hair flutters, and she was looking at me with a strong gaze, she was the woman called Azelea. The man who was alternating his gaze between Claude and Lydia had a menacing posture, he had ash colored hair and he was called Grain. The both of them had white coats on them, and underneath their coats they had light armor equipped.

They had a symbol of the Magician Society Organization imprinted on their chest, and on that symbol there was a star which showed their ranking within the organization, Azelea had two stars, Grain had one star.

—These two, were people dispatched from the Magician's Society.....!

I had a bad feeling running along the muscles of my spine.

Judging from the strength of the magical aura they were exuding, they were magicians from the reputable organization. However, why was such people being sent to a place like this.....?

Was I their target? Did I do something to aggravate them?.....I don't have anything that comes to mind but, the fact that they sent out two people from the magician's society, probably....means.....

[You guys....Ahh, the boy with the silver hair over there. You seem like the leader. Allow me to talk to you for a moment]

When the woman called Azelea called out to me, my heart felt like it would stop. I couldn't stop myself from sweating, and just like my body had been paralyzed I couldn't even move a muscle.

I was like a frog being stared down by a snake.

This was the same for both Claude and Lydia, they too were unable to speak and their movements had halted. I was looking downwards and Azelea was staring at me in silence as she began to approach me, when she took a step.

Whoosh! The magic which came from Azelea exploded outwards and envelops me. It was like being put in an extremely cold environment, the torrent of magic was so powerful that it made my body shiver. My body wouldn't stop shaking, and I embraced Milly firmly.

Step.....She took another step towards me.

[Do you have business with us!?]

She took another step, Milly raised her voice to question Azelea as she continued to draw near. Before I noticed it, Milly had already slipped out of my arms, she folded her own arms as she stood right in front of Azelea. Her feet were slightly trembling but she was able to remain composed even though she was being suppressed by their strength.

[.....I am the leader. I am the guild master of the Blue Sky Hunters, Milly Reyad]

[.....Fumu, so the leader wasn't the young boy over there? Has my eye's gone bad.....? There was just a little thing I wanted to ask you about.....]

[I already introduced myself, but you won't even voice out your name?]

Milly glared at Azelea head on. Seeing such a scene, the man called Grain, whistles in the background.

[Little lady, you seem to have quite a bit of courage don't cha~? Being able to be so bold in front of Azelea Senpai is quite the formidable thing. You will have a promising future it seems.....At the very least, it seems to be much brighter than the kid pissing his pants over there, don't you think?]

Saying such a thing Grain gave me a thumbs down. The man called Grain briskly makes his way towards Milly, with a grin on his face he tried to place his hand on top of Milly's head.

[Don't touch me!]

Milly used her small hands to brush of Grain's hand, for an instant he was surprised, but his face soon distorted into his usual smile. Suu....His forefinger was brought closer to Milly breast, and in the moment that he tried to touch her...

[Stop it Grain]

Azelea's voice interrupted him and Grain stopped his movements, he clicked his tongue in disappointment and straightened his back. When he straightened his back, he was actually quite tall.

[.....Excuse my impoliteness. I have been dispatched by the Magician's Society, my name is Azelea Sylphid. Have you seen a woman dressed in black around here? She has short black hair, and is a woman dressed in a black coat]

Instantly an image of Seruberie crossed my mind. Are these two magician's looking for Seruberie? No, I know that she can act a little excessively sometimes, but she doesn't really get involved with other people, and she's not the type of person to stir up trouble. The Magician Society doesn't usually dispatch people unless there has been a major dispute among the humans....

[Who knows? Since I have come here, I haven't met anyone else. So I can't help you]

Azelea continues to stare at Milly, and after a while of silence, she spoke.

[Is that so? In that case, I'm sorry to have disturbed you]

[Eh...? Ah..... Yeah....]

Azelea backed down from the situation quite easily, Milly was caught off guard by such an anticlimactic response.

[If you see her around here, it would be a great help to the Magician's Society if you could let us know]

[.....That person, is she someone that is being chased by the Magician's Society?]

[Not really, we just wanted to have a little chat with her]

At my question, Azelea laughed lightly and casually answered. Just talk....? I don't really know if she's telling me the truth or if it's a lie, but, if I continued to question her any further than this, it might put me in danger. Therefore I just responded to her words with silence.

[Let's get going Grain]

[Yeah, yeah, I understand..... Well then, I'll see ya later you shitty kids]

So as to make sure that Azelea did not hear his final words, he only mouthed out the words using his lips.

[I'm going to open it, Azelea Senpai]

[Yeah]

Holding his hands up in the air, Grain starts to mutter an incantation, as another blue light rises from the ground below forming a space distortion in the air, Grain uses his feet to step into it.

[Nevertheless she's made it really hard for us this time around hasn't she? That shitty bitch]

[Don't talk in such a vulgar way, Grain. We are representing the Magician's Society. Stop it with those kind of remarks that could make us lose face]

[Yeah, yeah, I know already. More importantly, you need to hurry up and enter, otherwise the portal will disappear, you know? Azalea Senpai]

[I suppose so, shall we go?]

Both Grain and Azalea vanishes after stepping into the blue light, and we were the only ones left in this place.



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CHAPTER 61

SUMMON SERVANT

After the agents who were dispatched from the Magician's Society vanished into the portal, all of us were just left standing there in a daze.

Time passes by without anyone saying a single word, after the last string of tension in Milly dissipates, she finally crumbled to the ground and that was when time started again.

I was startled back into action, and I immediately ran over to Milly and held her shoulders.

[Milly, I'm so sorry.....!]

[Fu.....Fufun, I am the leader after all right? ♪ But.....Ahaha.....my waist.....gave out.....]

When I looked closely, Milly legs were totally shaking and her body doesn't have any strength in it. I was supposed to be the one taking action in this kind of scene, however when the two people over powered me with their domineering aura's I couldn't move at all.

In the past, whenever I encountered a mage from the magician's society, they were all mostly underlings, even so, the 'underlings' were already frightening people with great strength, I did not expect that people with a star badge on them would be on a different plane altogether.

Shit, I'm so pathetic....

[.....Milly, you are amazing]

[Th.....That's not true! The reason I was able to try so hard is.....because.....Zeph is right beside me.....]

Milly was muttering unintelligibly as her face continued to become redder, she was trying to gloss over how deplorable and pathetic I was, and I could only embrace her even tighter.

[Wai.....Wait Zeph!?!]

Milly was struggling around and I continued to hold her until her power of struggling weakened.

[Milly-chan!]

Lydia came towards us with a hard tackle as both Milly and I were thrown into the ground.

[Woah!]

[I'm sorry! Milly-chan, Zeph-kun! I'm sorry I couldn't move....Even though I'm supposed to be the older sister.....I'm sorry.....!]

[The agents of the Magician society.....I've heard about them from the rumors but it turns out they are incredible people. For you to be able to stand up to them, without flinching is.....]

Claude also runs up to us, and she looked at Milly with eyes of respect and reverence.

[I....I'm telling you guys, I'm not that great!]

[I also lost in front of your bravery today]

[Mou~ Even Zeph.....You guys are making me blush.....]

I stood up. Milly was still being embraced by Lydia and she was covering her face in embarrassment.

The fact is that amount of latent potential contained in Milly's body far exceeds my own.

Perhaps the massive amount of magical energy acted as a wall for her, and it prevented the two people from overpowering her with their overwhelming aura's.....? No, saying this would just be an excuse on my part.

I just need to become even stronger. So much stronger that this will not ever happen again...

—-At Night.

Without speaking many words, we all returned to the town of Beruta.

Usually, we would be talking excitedly about our spoils of war for the day or the tough battles we fought, however, perhaps because everyone had a lot on their minds, today, we just returned to town as soon as possible.

[Then have a good night]

[Yeah]

[Have a good night, Zeph-kun]

I separated from the two girls after eating dinner, and after washing the sweat off my body I quickly went to bed.

—-Late into the night.

Short Sleeping (This is the name I came up with) after taking a small power nap, I woke up feeling refreshed and casted scout scope on to myself.

Zeph Einstein

Level 40

[Red] Magical Value 32, Magical Limit 62

[Blue] Magical Value 29, Magical Limit 87

[Green] Magical Value 31, Magical Limit 99

[Sky] Magical Value 31, Magical Limit 89

[Spirit] Magical Value 30, Magical Limit 97

Total Magical Value 1611/1622

The good thing is, the level of my Summon Servant Spell increased to level 1.

After continuously using Spirit magic for these past few days, the level of my White Crash and White Sphere has exceeded level 30, and finally I have become able to use this magic spell.

For the time being, I don't want to just summon some weird living thing so suddenly in the middle of my room, so I decided to go out of town.

After drinking my fill of water, I did some light stretches and I went out of the inn towards the outside of town. Recently, because of the training I had with Lydia, it has become a habit to do a little bit of calisthenics every single morning.

I teleported to the outskirts of town and reached an empty area, I was a little bit excited as I started to chant the magic.

[Summon Servant!]

I held my hands outwards as it started becoming enveloped in a white light, the light continued to grow stronger. That light formed into a human-like shape, and then...

Poof, what was born right in front of my palm, was a palm-sized girl. Her long hair reaches all the way to her feet and she was wearing a big ribbon on her head, she was also wearing a dress that suggested she was a high-class young lady of some sort.

On her back, there were small golden wings filled with magic, she really looked like a small angel girl that was supposed to be in a museum or something. Her age seemed to be around 5 or 6 years of age perhaps?

The young girl was looking about her vicinity, and she looked at me with her pure and innocent gaze, her voice sounded like a clear bell.

[.....Grandpa?]

I was instinctively, taken aback.

[G....grand....?]

Don't tell me that this fellow, could see within my soul or something?

Her small body flutters around the air as it danced about and demurely gets on top of my head. Her weight was quite light, it felt like I put on a hat.

Oi don't pull on my hair! Didn't you know it hurts!

I grabbed on to this little girl and put her in front of me.

[It hurts! it hurts! Grandpaa!]

[S....Sorry.....]

When I loosen my grip on the girl, she pouted her cheeks and had a face that seemed unhappy.

[What are you?]

[Me? I am Ain! Didn't grandpa call out for me?]

The girl who introduces herself as Ain, places her small palm on her chest, and she gave a curt bow as she greeted me.

Is that how it is? She seemed to be called out, when I casted Summon Servant, in other words this little girl was actually my familiar servant.

[Alright, Ain. What can you do? Can you please show me your powers?]

[I'm hungry! I want food~]

Our conversation didn't connect at all. Whilst smiling Ain was demanding me to feed her some food.

[.....Well I guess it's fine.....What would you like to eat?]

[Jewels! Give me Grandpa's jewels! Please!]

She pointed at the bag that was hanging around my waist and Ain repeatedly called out "Jewels!".

It would seem that she means my high level mediums.

[When you mean you wanted to eat, did you mean these things?]

[Yeah that's the one! That jewel!]

I took out one of the high-level mediums from my bag and presented it to Ain, her face was glittering with energy as she accepted the medium with both her hands.

When I gave her the high-level medium she held it in her small hands, and she began to vigorously munch on it and it soon completely disappeared.

She looked like some sort of small animal that was eating nuts.

[More! More!]

[Alright, alright]

When I gave her another piece of the high-grade medium, she was into eating it wholeheartedly. Perhaps she was so into it right now that, she wouldn't even hear what I was saying.

[Uu~ I'm so full!]

In the end she eat up to five of my high-grade mediums and after she felt satisfied, she was now sitting on top of my shoulder whilst patting her own stomach.

[.....That's good for you. Now then Ain, can you tell me what your power is....?]

When I asked her the question once again, she merely yawned on my shoulder.

She had eyes that seemed like she was sleepy as she began to rub them, and with a blank expression, she muttered out a single word.

[Sleepy....]

As soon as she said this, she became particles of light, and Ain disappeared.

[.....Oi, Ain! Oii, hey! heyyyyyy!!?]

Afterwards, I went hunting out alone, and even though I tried to summon her again various times, Ain would not come out.

What the heck is wrong with this spell?

CHAPTER 62

DECISION

On the way back to town and on the returning path to the inn, I happened to pass by Lydia's house, despite the fact that it was still early in the morning, I heard both Lydia's and Claude's voices.

[Right there! Your stance is still weak! Claude-chan!]

[Yes!]

From the other side of the wall, the two people were sparring with each other in the backyard.

If I listened closely, Kaan! I could hear the sound of two wooden swords clashing against each other intermittently.

Oh yeah that's right, Lydia did have a wooden sword and a wooden axe in her backyard.

I thought that it was a decorative object she used as a display, but it turns out that it was able to be used by Claude for this mock battle.

[Hah! Yah! Toryaa!]

[Tsu! Ku.....! Yah!]

Guessing from the voice, the mock battle seemed to be a one-sided slaughter heavily tilted in Lydia's favor.

Under normal circumstances, Lydia would be taking a defensive stance and teaching us slowly, but perhaps because we had such a shameful encounter with the agents from the Magician Society, Lydia was really fired up as she relentlessly cornered Claude.

Even so, Claude doesn't get defeated easily, and she throws counter attacks of her own as well.

[Tahh! Hah!]

[Hoh! Tooh!]

Nevertheless, Claude's attacks seem to be easily dodged.

Do your best Claude, I believe that someday you will be able to go toe to toe with Lydia.

I stood outside the wall just listening to the sounds of them diligently practicing, and after a while I directed my footsteps towards the hotel.

—I sensed something coming out of the hotel, it felt like a gentle wave of magic that surged outwards.

It was coming out of Milly's room.

Milly was concentrating herself, and was probably in deep meditation.

She was refining the magical energy within her body and covering her body with the aura.

Deep meditation was one of the basic form of trainings a magician was required to be able to do, however, perfecting the art of meditation was not something that was simple to do.

Right now, there is still many useless actions, and the flow of magic coming out of Milly was not necessarily smooth, nevertheless, she was able to make up for it due to her huge amount of latent magical energy.

To think that she had this much magical energy within her body, the fact that she was able to move whilst being suppressed by the auras of the powerful agents made more sense now.

Although she was usually quite childish and she would normally act upon her whims, when she successfully entered the state of deep meditation, the amount of magical energy she is able to draw out is simply amazing.

If she was allowed to mature properly, let alone myself, she would easily be able to surpass those two agents from the Magician's Society.

(.....I can't just sit around and do nothing now, can I)

The moment I returned to the Inn, I went inside of my room, I sat cross-legged on the floor and slowed my breathing down in order to enter a state of deep meditation.

I refined the magical energy residing in the depths of my body, and slowly covered my whole body with the magical aura.

Did Mily notice that I was also training via deep meditation? It seems that in order to compete with me, she tried to raise the speed at which her magic was being refined.

(Guu.....Are you telling me she can still increase the speed.....? I am not going to lose either.....!

When I raised the amount of magic circulating throughout my body, Milly sensed it and seemed to increase it again slightly. In addition to this, I also respond in kind.....

This continued on for a while longer, we started to lose track of time as we immersed ourselves in the meditation battle that we were currently having.

[Oh? Zeph, what are you doing right now?]

Claude had returned from her special training with Lydia, and right now I was lying on my back with my legs and arms sprawled out.

And soon after that, Milly opens the door and enters my room.

Did she come here whilst entrusting her body to the wall? Although she managed to open the door, her shoulder was currently resting against the wall so that it could prop her up.

It would of been fine if she just went to bed, but it seems like she wanted to gloat over her victory, she was breathing out *Zeeh Zeeh* and her breathing was quite rough.

[Fu.....Fufu, It's my victory isn't it.....? Zeph....]

[.....Although you say that, aren't your legs also unsteady?]

[I.....Can already move.....See? Nihihi♪]

Saying that she folded her arms, and she tried to make a victory stance, which looked like it was about to fall apart at any moment now.

Your legs are clearly shaking, you know that right?

Seeing this scene, Claude lets out a sigh.

[It seems that you guys have had it quite hard haven't you? For today, you should both rest up. I will ask Lydia to teach me a little bit more about martial arts, so I should get going soon]

After declaring her part, she goes out of the room with an amazed expression.

The sound of her footsteps descending the stairs got softer and softer, before long silence wrapped around our surroundings.

[How long are you going to be standing like that, why don't you come over and sit down, Milly?]

[.....Yeah]

Milly started to unfold her arm, but the moment she stepped forward in order to sit on the chair, Milly steps on her own foot and she tripped over.

[Milly!?!]

[Watatatata!?!]

Milly was flapping her wings like a bird, in an attempt to regain the loss of balance she was experiencing.....But all it did was by her some time, seeing this, I immediately dashed forwards in order to catch her fall, however my body which had just released a huge amount of magical energy during my training was barely able to move.

And,

Dosunn! A ballistic sound resounded in the room.

Even so, I was able to safely catch Milly's falling body.

The weight of two people crashing towards the floor, sent a sensation of pain towards my back, however when I was able to confirm that she was safely within my arms, I sighed a breath of relief.

[Are you alright? Milly]

[Y...Yeah, Thank you.....]

Milly was being carried in my embrace and she quickly regained her footing with my help, and also started to perform basic meditation in order to replenish some of her magical reserves.

She was wearing her thin night clothes, moreover the temperature of her body including the softness of a girl was felt much more strongly than usual

And I also noticed the fact that her small body, was trembling a little in my arms.

[Milly?]

When I called out towards her, she suddenly strengthened the grip on my clothes whilst looking up at me.

Her eyes seemed really feverish right now, and it was a little surprising.

Her face was really close, and when she opened her mouth to speak, her sweet breath tickles my nose.

[Zeph.....I, don't want to lose to those two agents, I want to become a lot stronger. I want to be strong enough.....so that I am able to protect everyone, with absolute certainty!]

Saying such determined words, Milly's eyes shone with a bright light which signified her strong resolution. Although for a moment, the atmosphere was a little tense, but the moment I let out a sigh and pat her head, Milly's face turned into a comfortable expression.

[Is it so.....? But you know what Milly? I think that it is better to not have any thoughts of stirring up trouble with the agents of the Magician Society. Although the Magician Society is not one to abuse their power against the people, if you provoked them

intentionally then it might lead to us being targeted by the people from the Magician Society.

[...Yeah, I'm sorry.....But they had a really coercive and overbearing magical aura that I just.....]

Certainly, it was beyond our imaginations just how much magic they were able to harness around them.

The agents of the Magician's Society was bound by their own set of rules, and they had to follow the correct protocols, they were definitely not allowed to take revenge on people for personal reasons.

And whilst the strength of these agents would far exceed your average magician, if they broke the rules of the magician's society, then they would no longer be permitted to use magic any longer.

Although Milly was gallantly standing up to the dispatched agents, if she somehow offended them and were deemed to be resisting, it may even lead to the other party making an attack.

(However, when I think back to the times that the Magicians' Society sent out their people to me, none of them possessed that high level of magic.....]

I tried to analyse why this was the case and I went around in circles, with no answers to speak of.

Meanwhile, my right hand was automatically playing around with Milly's hair whilst thinking about the solutions.

(I don't get it.....did they perhaps have a special inherent ability.....?)

I was continuing to brood over the topic. Milly who was exhausted from using her magical energy too much, was currently sleeping as she let out a gentle sleepers breathing.

Oi, if you sleep in this kind of position, doesn't that mean that I can't really move out of this position?

I wanted to twist out of this situation, but Milly was just really persistent, she wouldn't let me escape and she firmly clung on to me.

Even so, forcibly waking her up from her stupor was not a very nice thing to do.

When I was thinking about what to do, Milly was muttering something out in her sleep.

[E..everyone, I will be sure to protect, them.....alright? Zeph.....]

[.....Oh geez, I really cannot afford to lose to her like this]

Milly was breathing peacefully as I continued to pat her head, Whilst looking over her, I also swore to become strong enough to protect those important to me.

CHAPTER 63

AZALEA

In the end, I didn't have any other choice but to carry Milly until she wakes up. It is probably because I'm also tired from training every day? Feeling the soft touch of Milly, the drowsiness attacks me, and I ended up sleeping until morning.

-Crash!

And then, in the middle of my drowsiness, a strong and unexpected blow toward my chin wakes me up. Milly was in front of me, she was bright red and holding down her head. That reminds me, I fell asleep while hugging Milly.

It may be that because I was in front of her when she woke up, in the confusion, she gave me a head-butt. Shit, a little blood came out of my nose...

[~~Geez... You slept over me without permission. Milly, you're the one who's wrong here]

[If... If I was sleeping then wake me up! What are you going to do if someone sees us!]

[It's really good that Claude didn't see us]

[...I don't care anymore! Idiot!]

When making fun of her, Milly who has become reddened turns away. When lifting my body, my stomach makes a 'guu' sound. That reminds me, I didn't eat anything since I was last awake.

[Are you hungry?]

[...Hmm]

[Why don't we eat outside today?]

Saying that, Milly pulls my hand and begins to run towards the outside of the inn.

She seems like she is fully recovered just with that little sleep.

When going out to the streets, I found myself with a woman who was in the middle of preparing the launch, her loud voice was like a sales pitch as if she was calling someone to get closer. It's really cheap, and when I'm going to buy something good, a customer, a customer and another customer...The situation was like a battlefield.

[Fuwaa~ this is amazing....]

[Well, the schedule is kinda bad. Should we change places? There isn't sufficient charm for a date here]

[Ehh!? A da,da,da... What are you talking about?]

[It's a joke]

[Wh... Stupid! Stupid! You are a stupid Zeph!]

I was laughing *Kukuku*, Milly slaps my back again and again.

When we entered into a side street while receiving them on my back, the moment we change our course, we stumbled against something. It almost sent Milly flying away, but I manage to catch her into my arms.

[I'm sorry, I was looking away]

[No, I'm the one who is...]

[A- -a!!]

When Milly raises her head and shouts with a surprised face, the person who was there was a familiar black-haired woman. A skirt with long sleeve cardigan, hooded and even though her clothes are the only thing that matches her, there is no way I will never forget that appearance.

-The dispatchment of mages that only happened the other from the magician's society. If I remember correctly, she said she was called Azalea?

[If I'm not mistaken, you are... Muguuu!?!]

(Idiot! Your voice is loud!)

When Milly was about to raise her voice, I block her mouth and I warn her in low voice. A dispatched mage is the closest existence who was given the ability to judge someone by the magician's society as a means to protect themselves. There are many people who has a grudge against them, and making that grudge public in front of others I can't say that it is a good choice.

[Forgive me, that you have to put me in consideration]

Saying that, Azalea dispelled the tension. Although she is grinning, to us who are aware of what happened yesterday, that bright smile is frightening.

[Certainly, you are, Milly-chan and Zeph-kun, right?]

[...Leaving that aside Milly, I don't remember introducing myself]

[...Ah! Now that you mention it!]

Milly becomes aware of the fact. Azelea who changes her attention to me, as if my remark didn't affect her at all, continues using a calm expression without indication that will change at all.

[Hahaha, I ended up making you take a strange caution. Even so, I didn't have that intention]

To us who were retreating slowly, Azelea is trying to show that she isn't hostile.

[In fact, I've heard of you before. There was a teacher called Clare in the Nanami town, isn't that right? She is, my older sister]

[Teacher Clare's younger sister?]

Teacher Clare was from when we were attending the school in the Nanami town, a person who works as a teacher. Though I heard that she had a sister, but for it to be a dispatched mage...But now that she mentions it, somehow her presence looks a little like teacher Clare.

[I heard a lot from my sister. That you are very mischievous and so I was asked to take care of you if we were to ever meet]

I didn't think we would have such a meeting in this way. In addition, Azalea was smiling.

At that time when Milly couldn't adapt too well to the school, Clare-sensei talked to me but I answered that it was very troublesome, even so it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be.

After revealing a familiar name, my guard loosened a bit and Azalea continued talking.

[It was this kind of meeting, so it's natural to be on guard. Grain and I were also a little excited too. I don't behave in this way usually. Here, don't you want to eat some candies, both of you?]

After saying that, with a 'gosogoso' sound from her pocket, Azelia takes out two stick candy, and Milly receives it timidly.

[Are you suppressing your magic today? To have that kind of control to that extent, you are really skilful]

[Aah, yesterday there was a peculiar mage. He was extending his overwhelming power into the surroundings, it might be to seal teleportation... Hm? Can it be because of our overwhelming power that everyone is awfully afraid of us?]

Azelia was pondering about my words, there seems to be no maliciousness at all. Or maybe I need to become aware of the fact that her reaction is obviously odd. Are you really alright, dispatched magician.

[Ah, I'm sorry. It's because we normally act independently. We almost never formed a team]

In other words, Seruberie is...

[The one we have been chasing after is just that troublesome. Though it is a shameful story, she escaped from us several times. You two if you ever meet her don't ever come close to her, she's dangerous]

Azalea lift her forefinger, warning us. Her face shows she is genuinely concerned about us, so Milly and I look at each other.

[...Well, leaving that aside, you too Zeph-kun, are you not going to eat?]

When I was hesitating in whether or not to receive the candy, I give a look to Milly but she had already begun to lick it.

[It's delicious, you know?]

You are too accustomed to eat food off of strangers....This time it might be good idea to teach her to not receive food from strangers. But well, this probably isn't poisoned. When I open the cover of the candy, and I start to lick it, the delicious taste of the concentrated sugar starts to melt in my tongue.

[If both of you are okay with that, why don't we talk in another place? I'll even treat you to some juice]

Azalea starts walking after saying that, and Milly follows closely. And I didn't have other choice but to follow their backs after letting out a sigh.

After waiting for a moment at the table after arriving, the drinks that everyone ordered were brought out. Azalea asked for a black coffee, Milly a mixed juice, and me a hot milk.

[Hahaha♪ That Zeph asked for milk, he is like a chil~d♪]

[Warm milk is healthy for the body and bones, it stimulates a healthy growth. A drink that gives an efficient nourishment]

[That's right, if Milly doesn't drink milk too you will not grow big~]

[Is... Is that true?]

[Are you going to drink?]

Saying that, she is given a hot milk and after receiving it, she stays a little silent.

[What's wrong? Aren't you going to drink it?]

[No... Um... That is... Isn't this an i-indirect ki...]

She was muttering something in a low voice, and then Milly reddens. But with an expression as if she had decided on something, she drinks the milk with a 'gulp'.

[It's as I had heard from my sister, you get along well. You two]

[More or less. Even though we look like this we have been together for a while]

Like wanting for a look of approval from Milly, she takes the cup to her mouth and with a gulp she nods. Seeing our behaviour, after a grin, Azalea continued talking.

[...Then, how long has been since you two started going out?]

Buu – – – – u!! The milk that Milly had in her mouth was majestically spilled out towards Azalea. It rained incessantly and without mercy over the face of Azalea, being soaked, her pretty black hair was dyed in white.

[...Kehokkeho, I'm... I'm sorry. But it was because you said something strange...]

[...Yes, it's my fault for not having dodged. I still don't have enough training.]

While dripping drops of milk, Azalea took a handkerchief from her own pocket.

CHAPTER 64

THE POWER OF AIN

[Woops, it's already time, I'm sorry but I was in the middle of shopping. You will have to excuse me.]

[Bye-Bye, Azalea-san]

As a response to Milly who was waving her hand, Azalea laughs. In the end, we were treated with desserts and tea cakes by Azalea, and it seems that Milly was completely tamed by her.

[Let's go, Zeph!]

[Aah]

So she is the dispatched mage Azalea. I thought, that the dispatched mages were always in the capital, but to think that someone like her is in this remote countryside. Although it's probably because her older sister, Clare-sensei lives here, that type of relation?

But if she had that space teleportation magic, then the distance should not be a big problem.

While seeing Azalea leave, I barely remembered to use scout scope on her.

Azalea Silfy

Level 99

[Red] Magic level 41 Level limit: 41

[Blue] Magic level 39 Level limit: 39

[Green] Magic level 54 Level limit: 54

[Sky] Magic level: 59 Level limit: 59

[Soul] Magic level: 36 Level limit: 36

Magic level: 6201/6201

Azalea's level is 99. Her unique magic's are too many to be counted, and she has 100 or more in her possession. I was aware that dispatched mages have many unique skills so I wasn't surprised, but having so many to that extent... Moreover, even her level is 99.

Seruberie and now even Azalea, so young and yet their levels are so high. Seruberie has her unique magic called chronos, and Azalea reached to the point where she can be called a dispatched mage which holds no restraints whatsoever.

To use them as an example is something else right. But well, the higher the place I can aim towards, the more competition I will have. Placing my hand on her head with a slap, I muttered.

[We must also become strong]

[?]

Milly who has like a question mark on her face, but as soon as I start to gently stroke her head, her expression changes to one of comfortableness.

Night.

As soon as I left the town, I teleport myself towards the ruined church. The purpose is to experiment with the summon servant which I couldn't in the last few days to my heart's content.

I started to chant the summon servant spell, and in the same way that yesterday, the same familiar, Ain, came from inside the light. Looking through the scout scope, the summon servant with the word level 2 has turned now into a dark grey color. If I think the word was white before, then I can think that it will be not possible to use it for a little while after it has turned a dark grey color. Even the magic consumption which is 500 is a lot.

The next thing I do is use the scout scope on Ain.

Ainbell Ruby-Eye

Level 2

Magic level 15/15

Even though her magic level for a level 2 is low, I will leave aside that for now. It seems that she doesn't have much magic either. Then I check the contents of my bag. The high-level medium inside of the bag didn't decrease, so it will be possible to use summon servant spell with only magic power. Or at least at the present stage.

[Grandpa, did you call me?]

I incline my head, Ain was flying around me. The level of Ain should be the same that summon servant spell. So that means that maybe when I level up the summon servant's level, Ain too will grow.

[Let's continue yesterday's question. Ain, what can you do?]

[Nn~n... I don't know! A meal please!]

As I thought, today is not good either. I can't grab her attention at all, just like yesterday.

I handed a high-level medium to Ain who had a face full of glory, then I let out a sigh when I see her eating and making a crunching sound.

—Immediately after, just when I feel a presence behind me I proceed to turn around. A zombie has come. I chose this proving ground where monsters appear with the only purpose of testing the power of Ain.

Judging from yesterday's response, I predicted that we wouldn't be having much of a conversation so. I have a few guesses as to what extent her strength is.

Seruberie's unique magic, the magic to summon a snake made of magic, something like an enchantment spell type to reinforce her magic, and even the familiar can attack by his own decision. Or the type to strengthen my own physical strength... Well, it's likely it will be one of those three options.

And because I saw many mages summoning familiars with their unique magic, I can roughly deduce their strength.

I quickly approached the zombie that was approaching and I stood in front of it.

The zombie stops his movement like it was puzzled but only for an instant, and like wanting to test its strength by tearing me up, it comes to me attacking.

Even though I easily evade its attacks, I didn't move at all. Though I continue evading several times, Ain's behaviour didn't have any change, it was only flying around me. The only other option left is that it may improve my magic power?

After having retreated with a back step, I casted the time square in my mind and white crash simultaneously, and until the effect go away I took note of the time, then I use the scout scope on the zombie.

I let time run and after the zombie was wrapped around by a light, the effect of the scout scope was put into action.

Zombie

Level 6

Magic level: 4112/452 (TL note: Overkill this is the correct figure being displayed)

I could see the remaining figure just before the zombie fell down. I thought about this method just a while back, and it is the method of using time square, right after chanting out time square if I used scout scope along with it, I am able to see exactly how much damage it has taken right before its death.

There are many cases of experimenting magic against weak monsters, and at the same time there are many times when monsters are defeated in one strike, so it's difficult to assert the damage to eliminate the monster, but if I use this, I will be able to guess to certain extent.

The damage I've done is about 4600. I think my damage from when I was trying to test my attack has increased a little from before I called Ain.

But leaving that aside, something worthy of special mention is that even if I use the white crash, I don't consume a high-level medium. With the little money I have after having sold the king nippers card, I'm very pleased to have this kind of power.

[Grandpa, I'm hungry~]

[Really, even though you have already eaten..]

No, since Ain itself require high-level mediums, as I thought, I need to secure a stable source of supply. I only gave one high-level medium to Ain, and then I went to search zombies with teleportation.

[I'm sleepy...]

[Aah, good night]

I reply to Ain when who was disappearing while rubbing her eyes, and then the next moment I start thinking about the experiment results.

Apparently, the ability of Ain is to reduce the cost of invoking and improve the power but only when it's related to the soul magic. And after a fixed time it seems that she needs to consume a high-level medium. I can say the duration is about ten minutes?

Even though I tried to attack many zombies using white crash, only a lowly 5% was improved, moreover, she doesn't strengthen any of the other magic's. Frankly I can say that in the current state the summon servant spell doesn't have any noticeable effect, but as Ain grows and levels up, I can expect the efficiency of her power to improve.

For the time being I can't use the summon servant spell anymore, so I will end my experiment for today.

Well, to my next task... In the middle of my thinking a person has appeared. The person who appeared from the dark was Seruberie. Because I saw burning marks on the ground I knew that Seruberie had been hunting the King of the Dead.

There was another reason why I chose this place as a place for my experiments. And it was to meet Seruberie, and ask her about the relationship between her and the dispatched magicians.

When Seruberie took notice of me, she made a surprised face for a moment after seeing an unexpected visitor.

CHAPTER 65

THIEF

Seruberie was standing in the ruined church, in a corner of the graveyard.

The King of the Dead resurrects every week, and even though I don't know the exact moment in which it resurrects, I approach Seruberie. I was not quite sure whether or not I could meet Seruberie today, but I was lucky this time.

[We meet again]

[Preparing an ambush, I cannot say it's a hobby that I admire]

Even though I'm being criticized by my ambush, she doesn't look angry to that extent

[Sorry. There was something I wanted to tell you no matter what]

[Something you want to tell me...?]

[Yesterday, after you saved us, Milly and I, we met with dispatched mages from the magician society and it seems they were looking very hard for you, Seruberie...]

[Oh it's about that?]

As if it was something troublesome, Seruberie fiddles with her hair. Well, in this ruins there is only one layer, so she is probably aware that she is being chased? She takes out a clock from her coat, checks the time and then she turns around facing me.

[I'm sorry but the King of the Dead will resurrect shortly. Can we talk a bit later?]

[Aah, since I am also here, I will help you. Seruberie]

Just then, the King of the Dead resurrected in front of us, but we were able to repulse it with ease. After Seruberie fires her magic, her magic power is consumed, so I take care of buying enough time for her to recover.

This was repeated three times until the King of the Dead was completely worn-out and had collapsed. Even though it was a low rank boss, there is a limit to killing it with

one blow. As I thought, Seruberie's power is terrific. After she put the drop item into her bag and the snake bone ring into her pocket, she turns around facing towards me.

[I'm sorry, you even had to help me]

[It doesn't matter, even if I don't help you I am sure that you can defeat it alone]

It was the truth, I only helped her to gain a bit of time.

[...Then, do you mind if continue our conversation?]

[Yeah, I suppose so...]

Seruberie sighs like it was bothersome, it is quite evident that this is not a topic she wants to talk about.

[Did you do something to the magician society to make them pursue you?]

[I didn't do anything to make them pursue me to this extent]

[If it was not something so important, then they wouldn't send dispatched mages]

It seems that this is a topic she doesn't want to talk about, but I can't let it pass. Against the persistent me, she answer as if she had surrendered.

[...I only borrowed a scroll that was in the society and that's all]

I can't close up my mouth. No matter how you think about it, it's really serious.

[...So, have you returned it?]

[...Not yet]

[isn't that clearly a robbery...?]

That reminds me, back in the days when I was travelling together with Seruberie, she always grabbed my stuff and used them as she pleased, but I didn't think it was possible for her to do the same thing against others and especially against the society. However, this unique magic that was written on a scroll by the society must

be fully guarded, you've done a great job in stealing it. Seruberie is the type of person that can do something like that, but as always, she is extremely reckless.

[.....Why didn't you return it?]

[...When I was about to do that, they started to chase after me so I ended up running. The pursuers attacked me without asking questions or answering me, so I don't know if this is a good time to go there again and return it...]

So you mean that you ended running all this time until today. I noticed that you had difficulties in associating with other people but for them to be to this extent.

[You know, the more time it passes the more difficult it will be to return it!]

[I tried to return it secretly at night, but the security became strict so in the end I couldn't return it]

This person is hopeless... If I don't do something quickly then... She turns away her eyes from me, and standing there like it was really troublesome she seemed as if she were a child being scolded.

[...I understood. I will be the one who returns it so can you give me the scroll to me?]

[That will be a big help... Muu, you are saying that, but aren't you secretly planning to learn the scroll in this way?]

Good grief! This has become so troublesome because you are so perceptive at bad times. Grinning and laughing, I turn around facing Seruberie and I reply her,

[I leave it to your imagination. Seruberie]

[It seems that I can't let down my guard against you, even a bit]

Fufufu, both of us had a wicked smile on our faces.

[Well, I don't have any problem with that, but Zeph, if the magician's society find out that you have been in contact with me, it's possible that you will be marked down by them]

[I'll do it in a way in which they wouldn't find out. I have already thought of a plan]

I know where teacher Clare's house is. If she is the sister of Azalea, then, If I say I picked it up from the ground, I only have to pass it to teacher Clare and somehow I will be able to deceive her,

[But anyways, it's better if you apologize. It will be better for your image even if is not certain they will ever forgive you]

When you look at Azalea, she doesn't seem like an unsociable dispatched mage with which you can't talk to.

[...I'm not sure, so if it's possible can you tell them in my stead Zeph?]

[Even if I am the one to tell them something, it will not have the full sincerity... At least write an apology letter yourself]

[If it's only that...]

Seruberie unwillingly uses the collapsed gravestone as a desk to write the letter of apology. I peek to see if she is truly writing, but then she uses her hand to block my view. Are you a child?

I think the moment when we first met she was a bit more honest... And even at that time she was already avoiding relationships with people... Leaving aside the disappointment, this Seruberie that is like a child is kind of refreshing.

For a short moment I continue to protect Seruberie while she is writing the letter, and then when she finishes writing, she sealed the letter and gives it to me together with the scroll.

[...Fuu]

[Good work]

After letting out a sigh, Seruberie puts the pen in her coat. I received the letter and the scroll that she passed to me with her hand, and then when I look to the contents, I saw on the bottom the name of the magic that Seruberie is using "Chronos".

[That scroll is a unique magic that only by just possessing it, the growth is specially fast. When I got that for several years, my growth accelerated with great speed]

Let's not reply her about the fact that she stole it for several years. Because in that aspect I have a similar way of thinking as her, birds of a feather flock together.

[That's right, Seruberie. Why don't you join our guild? I'm sure our companions will accept you]

[This body is being chased by the society. It's likely I will trouble you, it's better to stop here]

[...Are you embarrassed?]

The moment I said that, Seruberie looks away, looking at the opposite direction. Uu... I have made her angry? Because when Seruberie is angry, she stops talking.

[Um... Seruberie?]

When I get close and I call her, she displays some action like she was playing with something with her hand. Immediately after, with a *bump* my head was hit by something.

[...It's not possible for me to enter in your guild, but I will pass this to you. If something happens, then you may call me]

Then after saying that, Seruberie used teleportation and went away.

Go away but do that after hearing my answer, good grief... What's more, I don't know where she went in this darkness. A red ball floats on the tip of my finger, illuminating the place. When I see the ground, something was reflected by my light.

[Isn't this....the fragment of a crystal ring...?]

This is made at the time when a guild is created, and it is possible to talk telepathically but only with the other people who have parts of the fragment. Nevertheless, there is a restriction.

[With this even if I am holding a part of the fragment I can't communicate with you, you know?]

With this crystal ring, the holders of the fragments can't begin the conversation, they can only receive it. That Seruberie, she doesn't seem to have ever used it before...

This is why you are always alone...

Letting out a sigh, I swore to myself that the next time I met Seruberie I will teach her how to use this.

CHAPTER 66

WEARING FEMININE CLOTHES

After separating from Seruberie and returning to town, the sun was beginning to rise and it had already passed breakfast time. After all I did do quite a bit of things today.

If it's already this late anyways, I don't think it would matter much if I took my time at a leisurely pace. Before returning to the inn, shall I go visit some street stalls? Who knows, I could find some really cheap high-level mediums from one of the stores.

I walked into an open area with a lot of street stalls, and from the corner of my eyes, I caught sight of someone I was acquainted with. It was Claude.

[Isn't that you Zeph-kun? Good morning]

[Ahh, good morning, Claude. I've come a little late. My bad]

[I also just returned just now. I was at sparring with Lydia and I may have expended too much energy. I was going to use the guild message system to tell Milly that I was going to be late, but there was no answer from her end. Maybe she's still asleep.....?]

If I remember correctly, she had also risen up really early yesterday and was sparring with Lydia. When I turn my focus towards our inn, I could feel Milly's magical power being trained.

[Milly is just Milly so she must be doing something by herself. She's probably just too concentrated to notice that you've sent her a message]

[Lately, she's been getting up quite early every day in order to meditate. Normally, whenever I come back home, she would be so concentrated that she doesn't even hear me arrive, so I suppose it makes sense]

I can't believe that sleepy head is becoming an early riser. It seems that Claude is also the same, because of my influence on them, these two people have been waking up every morning in order to train themselves.

[Don't overwork yourself too much alright? Both Claude and Milly are still growing children, you guys are not yet established adventurers, therefore...]

[That may be true, but.....Why is Zeph-kun, who is supposed to be the youngest one of us all, trying to treat us like children?! Mouu]

[Fuh, I guess you are right on that one. Hahah]

Both of her hands are on her waist and she puffs out her cheeks. I unintentionally burst into laughter after agreeing with her opinion.

[Let me just tell you, Zeph-kun you are such a weirdo you know that!]

[I know, I know.....Kukuku]

If I keep laughing too much, Claude might get unhappy, so let's just change the subject.

[By the way, Claude since you are also here, does it mean that you are also doing some shopping?]

[Umm.....Well.....]

For some reason she answered in a shy manner.

Because we have been hunting almost every single day, we have been able to obtain all of our basic equipment, therefore whenever we would get a rare item, we would sell it to Lydia and then split the profits equally amongst those who came for the hunt.

She must have saved up enough money to some extent and wanted to have a look at new equipment.

[Zeph-kun, would you like to come with me and have a look around?]

[Of course I don't mind it]

When I agreed to come, Claude looked really happy and was in a good mood.

[Then let's go! If we come back home too late then I'll feel sorry for Milly]

After saying that Claude grabbed on to my hand. Well to be honest looking at what occurred yesterday, I think that even if we were a little late, she probably wouldn't mind.

[Come to think of it, Claude's shield is already worn out isn't it? Are you planning on getting a new one?]

[No, I've kind of built an emotional attachment to it, so if it's possible I want to maintain it and continue using it]

After taking out the shield which was filled with plenty of cracks, Claude starts to trace her fingers over her wounded shield.

[Since I left home, it has always been by my side..... it's been with me the longest]

[Certainly, if I looked carefully, I can see that the shield is decent in quality. There isn't any deep cracks, besides you've been maintaining it really well]

[When I left to start travelling, I received it from my mother. She told me "I hope that this will protect you"]

Claude's family was quite a poor knight family, and because of this fact she was driven away from her house in order to decrease the amount of mouths the family had to feed, it would seem that at that time she received the shield from her mother.

To think that she's kept it with her for such a long time, I don't doubt that she has some attachment to it.

[Then are you buying weapons?]

[Lydia is actually going to make my weapons]

[Then what did you want to buy?]

[Th.....That is.....]-just don't worry about it and please follow me!]

She pulls on my hands and walked forwards.

The destination we reached after walking for a while was actually a boutique shop that sold clothes, moreover the store had a stylish feel to it.

[.....We're here]

[I see, so you wanted to buy some clothes, If that's the case, wouldn't it have been better to ask Milly to come with you? I don't really know much about this kind of stuff]

[It's fine! Look! We're going in!]

She pushes me into the store and forcibly makes me enter.

[Hello, how can I help you today.....Oh?]

[H....Hello~]

The moment we entered the store, a female clerk wearing glasses greeted us. It would seem like they already knew each other. She probably came here quite often?

[The companion with you today, is that the person Claude-san would like to show your clothes to? Considering that you've brought him along today, can I assume that you will finally purchase the clothes?]

[Whawawa, What are you saying all of a sudden? Natalia-san geez.....M-mouu shall we have a look!? Zeph-kun!]

Watching Claude, Natalia was giggling "fufufu".

Rather than just being mere acquaintances it would seem like they knew each other on a first name basis. They probably spent a lot of time together?

[Claude, don't get cold feet now okay?]

[Like I said, I'll buy it today!!]

Both Natalia-san and I were grinning at Claude, and her face was completely red whilst she was picking her clothes.

As usual, she's so fun to tease.

[H....How does this one look?]

[Oh that's the thing you've tried on many times in the past isn't it?]

[If you like it then you should just buy it, right?]

She was holding a white dress across her own body, and both Natalia-san and I were still talking to her in a tongue-in-cheek manner.

After hearing our words, Claude's body froze in place and was trembling *puru puru (trembles)*

Did I go a little too far?

[...I'm very sorry Claude-sama. Please pardon my rudeness, if you will forgive me, how about I offer you a 10% discount?] *(TL: Natalia speaking in honorific's as a form of joking apology)*

[I'm also at fault, I've said to much, it's my bad Claude. You can choose whatever you like. I will pay the money]

[.....Really?]

[Yeah]

If she's going to be in a good mood just from this, then this is a cheap price to pay. Her mood was becoming better after I apologized to her, and she was happily looking around for various clothes.

Natalia-san was able to relate to what Claude was saying, but for me since I had no knowledge whatsoever about clothing, the best I could do was frantically nod my head in agreement.

[.....So, in the end, you chose the first one?]

[Yes, Thank you very much. Zeph-kun♪]

After changing her clothes in the fitting room, Claude walks out wearing the white dress and white heels to match, whilst cheerfully walking around me.

It seems that she was very pleased, at times she would twirl around to show off and the frill of her white dress would flutter. Claude was walking under the sunshine and at times, I could see the slender outline of her body through her slightly transparent dress.

[What do you think? I look like a girl, right?]

Claude was gently stroking her hair as she laughed, and looking at her like this, as one would expect, it would be really hard to think that she was a guy.

[.....That's true, it suits you really well. You look really cute, Claude]

When I praised her with my honest opinion, perhaps she didn't expect it coming from me, but Claude was starting to blush.

[.....Finally, you're treating me like a girl, aren't you?]

[Hey come on, did you really think that I seriously thought you were a man or something?]

[Just a little bit♪]

Talking so playfully like this, she was laughing and joking around and she truly looked like a mischievous child.

[Ah, you weren't thinking of me as a boy again did you?]

[.....It's just your imagination]

She's always so perceptive to my thoughts, it's troubling....

In any case, to think that she would be this happy just from buying clothes, she's a really simpleminded girl isn't she?

Hm? Now that you mention it, could it be.....?

[Hey Claude, do you always drive a bargain like this?]

[.....I will leave it up to your imagination♪]

After saying that Claude was laughing.

CHAPTER 67

LEARNING

By the time I returned to the Inn, Milly was already in the process of eating her lunch.

A large quantity of bread and stir-fried vegetables, meat and fish.....

Milly was still behaving herself, using a knife and fork to eat, but there was already a considerable amount of plates on the table.

[Welcome home. Zeph, Claude.....Ah, those clothes are really cute! Did you buy it just now?]

[Thank you.....Eh, that's a lot of food you are eating, Milly-san]

[It's because I knew you two were coming back. So I ordered more♪ I'm also really hungry]

Nihihi, Milly laughed.

[How did you know we were coming back?]

[Recently, my perception of magic has become really sensitive. Maybe it's because I've been around you guys for long time? It's especially easy to notice Zeph's presence, because his magical energy is really strong]

To be able to sense magic from a long distance, if I am not mistaken, it should require a considerably high amount of skill, being at such a young age, yet she already able to do such a thing?

Milly is incredible.

[Oh? But for some reason, I can't sense Azalea's magic at all]

[She may have suppressed her magical energy. Especially for those with a calling to being assassin type magicians, I have heard that they possess the ability to hide their existence from others]

[Heeh~ I see.....Or more like, is that dispatched magician here? in this town!? You're talking like you know her as an acquaintance or something.....]

[Ah, Claude, I didn't tell you about it? Just yesterday, we met up with that person]

Come to think of it I haven't mentioned this to Claude.

[That Azalea, is actually the younger sister of one of our acquaintances. The reason why she seemed so intimidating when we first met her, was apparently because she was using that sort of spell to amplify her aura]

[Is.....that so?]

[Of course I am not going to just completely believe in her words, but yeah...]

[Zeph is such a worry wart~ Just from her appearance, she didn't seem like a bad person]

[Even if you think so, it's always better to be careful about these things, you fool]

[Ihyahya! Ihya iheefefu]

Milly was going to talk back to me, so I pinched her cheeks and spread them apart.

[By the way, since we are on the topic of dispatch magicians, I've remembered something that I wanted to show you guys. After we finish eating, do you guys mind if we all go to Lydia's place?]

Claude and Milly were exchanging looks with each other, and whilst they did this I bit into the meat that was placed on the table.

[Oyo? Did you guys have something to discuss with me? I am sure I told you guys that I have to stay over and watch the store for today, so I can't go hunting, right?]

When we went over to Lydia's store, she was wearing her apron and was still in the middle of her working shift.

[My bad for interrupting your work. This will only take a short moment, do you mind if we discuss this a little more privately?]

[Hm? I don't mind but.....Is this some interesting thing again?]

Lydia seemed interested in what I had to say, and she was leading us to the interior of her shop.

After going in everyone sat down on a chair. I took out the Growth Scroll from my bag and placed it in the center of the table where everyone gathered around.

[What's this? It looks like some sort of scroll? Where did you get it from?]

Milly was persistently asking me questions and I momentarily stopped moving.

Now that you mention it.... I haven't really thought about how I was going to explain this to everyone did I? I don't really think I want to go to the trouble of explaining about Seruberie.....

[This is...Something I picked up]

I just spouted a lame excuse.

[Incidentally, Zeph usually gets up really early in order to hunt alone, right? Did you pick this up during those times?]

[Ahh.....yeah, that's right]

Nice follow! Claude.

[Fuu~nn a scroll.....? Isn't this unrelated to me?]

Lydia seemed to have lost interest and had both of her hands locked behind her head, when I turned my gaze towards her, she was looking straight back at me.

[This is a magical scroll named Growth, I don't really have all the details, but apparently, just by having this scroll, you are able to learn a magic that is able to increase the rate at which you grow and learn. If you can grasp the theoretical concepts behind it, anyone would be able to learn this scroll]

[I have never used magic before, even I can learn it?]

[Even if you don't possess any magical energy, it is possible to learn this scroll. I've already memorized it myself, so I wanted to pass this around and have everyone learn it]

After that I passed the growth scroll to everyone around the table and everyone was able to acquire the spell.....Except for Lydia.

[Ahh~ Mouu I don't get this at all~!]

Her hair was all frizzled up and she lay her head on the table as if her brains were about to short circuit. Because the scroll itself was written with magical characters, humans without any magic might find it harder to understand.....however, I don't think it should be as difficult as this.....I suppose, she's really a muscle-brain type person?

[It can't be helped, Leave it to me!]

Milly sat opposite from Lydia, and started teaching her in the magical ways.....However, Milly's teaching methods were a little abstract and she couldn't get the point across very well.

[Like I said, you need to feel the magic inside of your body and let it out, and then you need to concentrate so that you can grasp it firmly within your hands!]

[.....If you explain it like that, how would she be able to understand]

[That's right Milly-san. To begin with, what you are teaching her is actually the method to shoot out magic]

[If she becomes able to use magic, don't you think it would be really easy for her to learn the scroll?]

If you go about it that way, then the steps are completely reversed...

[Please leave it to me. Lydia-san, if you want to learn about magic, you only need to learn the theory. All you need is to understand it, then everything should be fine]

Milly seemed to be making no progress so I guess Claude volunteered herself to become Lydia's teacher.

[First off, shall I start from the notion of what magic actually is?]

[P....Please don't be too hard on me.....]

Claude was grinning but Lydia could only return a stiff smile.

[.....And so for that reason.....Umm, Lydia-san are you still listening to me?]

[Unnn.....I'm listening but I don't understand it at all!]

Lydia spoke out decisively as if admitting it made her feel refreshed.

[I think that even though Milly's explanations were a little jumbled up, I found that a little easier to understand]

[Eh.....? You're kidding.....]

Claude who was just told that she was actually below Milly in terms of teaching magic received a big shock to her mentality.

The thing about Claude's explanations was that she spoke in a soothing continuous tone, and it acted like a lullaby for Lydia as it became easy for her to drift off to sleep.

It can't be helped; I guess I'm the only one left who is able help her.

[Switch with me Claude. For someone like Lydia, don't you think that it will be much faster to drive it into her body rather than speak to her with words? Lydia, take off your clothes and please turn your back towards me]

[Wawawa-waitt Zeph-kun!? What are you saying!?!]

[Zeph-chi is finally reaching the pubescent age to be able to say such a thing.....]

[I....It doesn't have any kind of weird meaning naiwa! All I am going to try to do is communicate with your magical energy channels from the outside, and try to carve the growth scroll directly into you. If you don't really want to take off your clothes, you don't really have to you know?]

Saying that I turn behind Lydia and just thrust my hands under her clothes.

[Hyaah!? Wait a moment, can you please not touch any weird spots~]

[The clothes are obstructing me. Once I manage to locate where your magical veins are it will be fine, so just endure it until then]

[I.....I got it! I'll take it off! So just take your hands off me for a second~]

[Ah....Umm, it looks like I'm only being a hindrance here so...I'm going to go outside for a bit.....]

Claude wasn't able to stay here any longer it seems? Her face was blushing like a tomato and she quickly left the room in hurried footsteps, on the other hand, Lydia began to cheerfully take off her clothes.

[Haa, you know? you didn't really need to thrust it in so suddenly]

[If you just listened to me from the beginning it would have helped a lot]

Lydia's clothes fell to the floor with a light thud and her wide back appears before my eyes.

Her back was really well toned and in contrast with her white skin, she was like some kind of beautiful sculpture come to life.

[H.....Hurry up already! It's embarrassing you know?]

[Ah...yeah, I know]

I was charmed for a second there...

Magic is concentrated on to my right hand and when I gently touched her back, she reacted with a twitch.

Lydia's magic was so miniscule that I couldn't even use Scout Scope to measure it. Moreover, her magical veins which were supposed to circulate the magical energy around her body was really thin, so it was really hard for me to find it.

When I continued to crawl my hands across her back, Lydia began to leak out small moans from her lips.

[.....T-this feels kinda weird.....Zeph-chi it feels like....Your hands are moving inside of me.....]

[Lydia's the type that likes to learn by physically moving your body, right? Everyone in this world holds magical energy in their bodies, therefore, rather than teaching you in a lecture type manner, I think it will be easier for you to feel the magic if it's directly poured inside of your body]

When I started to teach Lydia magic, it was in the manner of teaching a student with talent but who just couldn't activate magic for some reason.

[Do you think that if this goes well, that I might even be able to use some magic from now on?]

[That would be impossible. Lydia's magical channels are too thin to be able to handle the use of magic. It is just physically impossible]

[Is that so....? That's disappointing]

Whilst saying so she had a smile on her face, I guess she didn't really care too much about it.

I guess she herself knows best and accepts them; the things she is good at and the things she just can't do.

Before long, my manipulation of her magical veins ended and I was able to etch the contents of the growth scroll into her body.

[With just this, my rate of improvement will be faster? I don't really feel any difference though.....?]

[Is that so? For me I actually felt a huge difference]

When I used Scout Scope on Lydia, I was able to confirm that the Growth skill was in her skill sets.

[You've learnt it without problems]

[I guess it's fine then....]

Most likely people in the past were not able to sense magical energy very well, so they can't really notice much of a difference.

As for me, the moment I learnt the Growth Scroll, I felt that my magical veins multiplied by several times, even Lydia's magical veins have thickened ever so slightly.

[Zeph-chi, can you pass me my clothes?]

Lydia was covering her breasts with her arm, and the other arm that was free was beckoning me to help her out, so I picked up her clothes which were on the ground, and just when I wanted to pass it over to her....

[Zeph? What are you doing?]

When I turned around to the direction of the voice, Milly who seemed to have snapped out of a daze spoke to me in an angry tone as her body was trembling.

[Achya (Tsk)~ You've woken up in the middle of the good parts haven't you Milly-chan? Although it's been regrettable, nothing happened between us you know?]

[That's exactly right, so I'd prefer if you stop with that misleading way of speaking.....]

Lydia was grinning cheekily and I had a frown on my face, Milly's face was completely swollen up as she pouted like a baby and she silently smacked me on the back.

At any rate, with this, everyone has been able to learn the Growth Scroll.

CHAPTER 68

LEVEL 2 (DUNGEON)

The next day, all of the members of our guild including Lydia went back to the Wanaruta Historical Ruins. As a revenge for our failure last time, this time around we plan to go straight into the second level of the dungeon.

Although we can use teleport to quickly transverse the first level of the dungeon, in order to get to the next level, we needed to climb the large set of stairs.

Because it isn't really possible to see clearly from the bottom of the staircase all the way to the top, we needed to carefully tread on the unstable staircase with a high amount of caution.

After all, the last time we came here, the stairway collapsed on us.

[Haah~ Fin~ally.....we reached the top~]

[Good work, Milly-chan♪]

[Are you alright?]

[I'm fine, I'm fine!]

Milly returned a V-sign back to Claude, and whilst she seemed to be sweating, she didn't seem completely exhausted like the last time.

Because she worked on improving her magic every single day, did that actually reinforce her physical strength to some degree?

Anyhow, we were finally able to climb the stairs successfully to the next level and a sound of tinkling bells resounded in our ears.

Along with the sound, a monster from the second level of the dungeon appeared, it was the Wraith Master.

The monster was wearing a dark brown robe, and carrying an oak cane, it wore a mask that was shaped like an ox and it was concealing itself in the shadows so I couldn't really see it that well.

The Wraith Master had two Mist Wraiths behind it working for it. This was going to be a formidable foe to fight.

Aside from boss monsters, demon's like this that had "underlings" working for them were very rare, but they did exist.

I coated both Lydia and Claude's weapons, with White Weapon granting them the attribute of Soul Magic, Milly was as per usual going with the motto of "the early bird gets the worm" and she already fired off a Blue Gale.

An extra-large tornado flew towards the demon and hindered their movements, while this was happening, I invoked Time Square to suspend the time and used Magic Amplification twice in a row, creating a White Sphere which was four times stronger.

Because I already acquired the Summon Servant spell, I thought it would be wise to save up on the high-level mediums by casting less Soul type magic and just using Magic Amplification in order to deal more damage.

The Mist Wraith that was surrounded by both Milly and my magical attacks disappeared and the left over Wraith Master was in a clash with both Claude and Lydia.

[Teeeyaaaaah!]

Claude was attacking the Wraith Master from the front with her sword and the monster repelled her attack with its cane, Lydia was attacking the Wraith from the back with her axe but the monster retaliated with Black Crash and blew her away.

[Wachichi!] (Woah)

[Are you alright! Lydia!]

[I'm okay, I barely managed to dodge it♪]

From my angle, it seemed like she got directly hit by the Black Crash....

Well I suppose this is Lydia we are talking about.

Before the fight Claude was already using her special ability Screen Point to nullify all magical attacks including the Black Crash, however she was still having trouble breaking through its defensive cane. The Wraith Master began to chant a spell.

[.....Call Slave]

The moment it finished chanting the spell, two Mist Wraiths appeared from thin air.

[Eck.....It can still call out more?!]

[It's no problem. Milly you know what to do right!]

[Of course♪]

Milly combined her Blue Gale with my White Sphere, which had already been amplified with Magic Amplification to strengthen it by four times its usual amount, immediately firing it off at the Mist Wraith's and killing them instantly.

The Wraith Master is capable of using his spell "Call Slave" quite frequently, and if the Mist Wraith's are not able to be killed instantly, then the party that needs to fight three demons at the same time might be hard pressed to achieve victory.

We already confirmed in the first level of the dungeon that we were able to defeat the Mist Wraith's relatively easily. Moreover, I already talked to Milly about us doing this type of combination attack whilst we were climbing the large stairway.

The Wraith Master was beginning to cast the Call Slave spell again, but this time around Claude was ready to take advantage of the vulnerability it exposed when it chanted, she went behind it and pierced her sword into its back. The Wraith Master took this blow head on and began to die as it crumbled and fell.

[As expected this is quite hard. Right now I used up half of my Mana]

[If more than one of these appear, it's probably best for us to run away ne~]

The Wraith Master is a demon that requires a considerably high levelled party to challenge.

Although the second level didn't really have plenty of Wraith Master's around, in the third level of the dungeon, there was a huge amount of Wraith Master's everywhere, so unless your party was comprised of very high levelled mages, then you wouldn't be able to hunt in the upper levels.

If we are able to hold our own in this second level of the dungeon, then we can already be considered as full-fledged Magicians. Even though we've been hunting here for many weeks now, I haven't really seen many people around.

High level Magicians.....Or even Adventurers, mainly hang around the capital cities and metropolitan areas, so I suppose in this kind of remote country side dungeon, there isn't really many people that would come to this dungeon.

I walked forwards while meditating.

That reminds me, I haven't used my Summon Servant spell today.

If I can summon Ain, I can save up on some high-quality mediums.

I think it's also good if I introduce her to everyone else.

[Ahem. Everyone can I have your attention for a moment?]

[Is there something wrong? Zeph-kun]

[I want to introduce you guys to a new magic I learnt]

[Introduce us to your magic? What do you mean?]

[Well, just have a look]

I calmed Milly down and chanted my Summon Servant spell, and from within the white light, Ain's figure appeared.

[.....Allow me to introduce you guys. This is Ain]

[Granpa, did you call me~?]

Ain's was flying around me as per usual, but when she noticed there were other people around me, her large round eyes expanded even more.

[Waaah~ What's with this girl!? She's so cuteeee~]

[Fairy.....? No, is she an Angel? Is this really magic?]

[This is.....so Adoorwableee~] (Lydia saying adorable in broken Japanese cause Ain's is too cute...)

All three of the girls had sparkling eyes.

Especially Lydia.

[Who are these guys? Grandpa are they your friends?]

It seems that she's a little surprised? Ain tried to get away from the three girls and flew behind my head in order to hide herself.

[It's okay~ You don't have to be afraid~nee? Ain-chu~wan]

Lydia was completely love-struck and no matter how you saw it, she who was extending her hands towards Ain looked terrifying.

I actually started to walk backwards with Ain as well, and Lydia was impatiently cornering the both of us.

Scary, Scary!

[Ne, have you been using White Sphere all this time so that you were able to call this girl out? I've heard before from my father that in Soul Magic there is a certain type of spell that can summon familiars, is this what this magic is?]

Milly suddenly shoved herself in between me and Lydia, changing the topic.

[That's right. I don't really know too much about Soul Magic but it seems like Milly's father knows quite a bit about it]

[Well, my father was quite the famous researcher after all]

After I praised her dad, Milly was a little embarrassed.

[How cutee~ Ain-chan, there, there~]

Milly presents her fingers towards Ain and gently pokes at her wings, when she did this, Ain's wings fluttered and brushed away Milly's fingers.

[.....Auu]

[Kukuku, It seems like she doesn't like you Milly]

Ain gets away from the three girls once again and climbs on to my shoulder.

[That's fine! If it's like that all I need to do is use the Summon Servant spell, then I can just get my own familiar, right?]

[.....That's true but...]

What I couldn't bring myself to tell her was that it required a huge quantity of high-quality mediums and it was very expensive to level up Soul Magic.

Well I guess if that's what Milly wants to spend her money on, it's up to her. Once she knew how expensive it was, she may stop trying, besides if she did try, considering that she now had the Growth Skill, she may actually be able to acquire the spell quite easily, who knows?

[For the time being, the amount of time I can keep Ain summoned is still limited. Therefore, let's continue hunting?]

After saying this the three girls nodded their heads, however, their gazes were still locked on to Ain.

Especially, Lydia's gaze...

CHAPTER 69

FAMILIAR SPIRIT'S

[Grandpa~ I'm hungry~. I want foood~]

Ain was flapping her wings in the air whilst pulling on to my hair.

Oi that hurts!

[H...Hey Zeph-chi, do you think it's alright if I give her food? pretty please?]

[.....I don't mind but..]

I passed a high-quality medium to Lydia who had a slovenly expression on her face whilst looking at Ain.

[Look here Ain-chu~wan, it's your foood~]

[Uwaah.....]

Even Claude seemed interested in feeding Ain...

Nevertheless, Ain turned her face away from Lydia and in the end I was the one who had to give her the food.

Lydia looked at me with a bitter expression.

[Zeph, can you give me some stones as well♪]

[Alright, show me your hands]

I placed a large quantity of mediums on to Milly's small hands.

The reason that Milly wanted the mediums was not to feed Ain but was for her own use so that she could learn some Soul Magic.

Well it's not bad for the party if she learns to use Soul Magic, so to a certain extent, I'm willing to help her out.

[Eheheh.....Thank you♪ I won't forget to repay this later kay]

[As long as you can manage by yourself after this it's fine]

[Haaaaii!] (Yeeess!)

Milly was wholeheartedly smiling and responding in an uplifted tone of voice, her motivation to learn Soul Magic seems to be really high.

I do understand her feelings though.

jingle ling-a-ling as soon as we heard the sound of a bell creeping from behind the building, we entered combat mode.

[What should I do? Should I fight as per usual?]

[If you want to use White Sphere, you should use magic amplification before shooting it. I will do the rest after that]

[You're so reliable aren't cha Zeph-chi]

The moment the Wraith Master comes out of the corner, Milly shoots out her amplified white sphere surrounding its escape and I also immediately cast time square.

During the time stop I simultaneously casted White Sphere and Red Sphere and launched it towards the monster, a large White Flame flies straight to the middle of the demon and a large explosion follows.

Blistering flames burn the ground and a single shadow is left standing as a heat haze shimmers the air around it.

The two underling Mist Wraith's seemed to have been obliterated.

[Shall I name this attack Nova Sphere?]

I used a combination of Soul Magic which was super effective against spirit type monsters and Red Magic which had an overall high offensive power.

The results were quite amazing, and it seems to have even more offensive power than activating two white spheres at the same time.

Because I wanted to save up on high-quality mediums I didn't really want to use too much combination magic if it included Soul Magic, but it seems that Soul Magic and Red Magic have really good compatibility.

All members of the party surrounded the left over Wraith Master, and without even giving it a chance to re-summon its servant's we managed to defeat it.

[Oh yeah, Zeph-kun didn't you mention something about not being able to call Aina for a long duration? In that case, how long can she last? It's already been an hour since she was summoned.....]

Come to think of it, Aina hasn't show any signs of disappearing today.

Normally she would get sleepy really quick, and after eating her stomachs fill, she would just disappear, but today, she's flying around me pretty energetically.

[Gramps what's wrong?]

[Well, You seem to be energetic today]

[Yea! Aina is pumped up -!]

Aina says while making somersaults around, it seems that she does not plan to disappear yet.

[It seems like today, her condition is really good]

[Hey~ Aina-Chan, are you in a good mood today?]

[Mood.....?]

[It means feelings that give you warmth, or feeling pumped up]

Claude raised her both arms doing a cheering pose, and Aina imitated it.

[Yea! I'm feeling great! I'm doing well!]

[My name is Claude, Ain-chan.I'll be in your care from now on okay?]

[Claude! Nice to meet you! Claude!]

Claude presented her index finger, and Ain responded, with a handshake.

Ain remembered Claude's name first rather than mine. She's really skillful on handling children, Milly and Lydia seems to be dumbfounded on the conversation right now.

[I....I'm Lydia, Ain-chan!]

[I'm Milly, Nice to meet you!]

The hands extended by Milly and Lydia was still avoided, Ain hid inside Claude's armor.

[hiiiee?! A.....Ain-chan!? Please don't go in to weird places]

[Claude.....These people.... Scary.....]

[Pu.....Kuku.....]

I unintentionally burst out laughing. She actually said that she was scared of them haha.

[That's heartless Zeph-chi.....]

[kukuku.....Sorry Sorry.....fufufu]

[Zeph is really stupid!]

While I'm laughing uncontrollably, I endured Milly's punches on my side while we are walking.

[But there aren't very many monsters is there? I feel like there were more enemies when I came earlier]

[Is that so? Or rather have you've been here already?]

[ah.....Yeah, when I woke up in the morning, I wonder how many times I've been here?]

That was dangerous a topic. Early morning (actually it was still midnight) that I already started hunting, I didn't want to have to talk about meeting Seruberie so I thought of some excuses in order to avoid their questioning.

[When you go to new hunting grounds, You check the area beforehand]

I decided to tell them this.

[Is that so. Thank you for always taking care of it]

Claude lowered her head and bowed.

To be honest it's not really anything to be that grateful about, in fact I kind of feel guilty if she acts like this.

[!! It's the enemy! Be careful!]

Mist wraiths was detected from Milly's blue wave, Milly fired White Crash and Lydia and Claude also sprung to action.

Shortly after the battle ended Ain was fed with a high-level medium and Lydia seems to have noticed something, she turned her gaze to nowhere.

[.....Everyone, Can you hear something over there?]

After saying that we listened carefully, we heard battle sounds from a distance. We looked where the sounds came from but we cannot see anything because of the geographical features of the area. Apparently we are hearing it from the direction of inner part of the ruins.

[People other than us will come won't they? It's not something unusual right?]

That's also true but a hunting ground of this caliber is not something normal people can easily enter, moreover...

[Let's go and check it out for a moment?]

[Zeph?]

[Don't you think it will be a good reference.....for our battle experience?]

[Is that what this is about?]

After the going through a complicated pathway, there's was a narrow path where we I could barely slip past.

[Wait.....Why are we going around this way? Isn't there a better path, geez!]

[There might be possibly other passages that connects to it but.....]

Originally, this place has really complicated terrain, it's not impossible that it will have another passageway. But we were already close to the sounds of battle so I have no doubt that the target is here.....However.

[Hey, Isn't the battle taking too long?]

[.....I also think it's dragging out for quite a long time]

5 minutes has passed since we entered this narrow path.

Our battle time was only around 1 minute, so thinking about it, this battle was taking a long time and it was a little strange.

[Well we should understand after seeing it.]

We passed through the wall of the broken house, after moving out of the place we saw Grain the dispatched magician.

However, Grain himself was not fighting, he was merely grinning while looking at the two girls. A red colored long-haired girl holding a spear and a blue colored short-cut girl holding a sword on both hands.

It seems that those two are fighting mist wraiths.

At the same time wings were on their backs and their appearance reminded me of Ain.

[.....Those people, are the same as me.....?]

Inside Claude's armor, Ain was peeking at the two girls and muttering to herself, Grain seems to have noticed it, and turned to look towards us.



RE: MASTER MAGIC

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